

THE TIMES



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A PRESIDENT AT WAR

● ON TRIAL IN THE SENATE
pages 10,11
● IS SADDAM FOXED?
pages 2,3,4

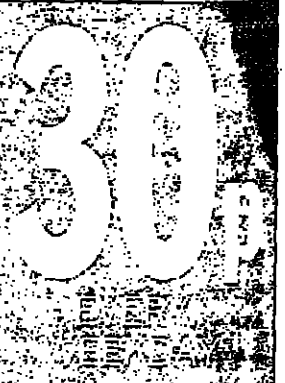


Falling cost of Christmas

pages 13

ARSENAL

re on the face



Britain and America prepared to use force again

Tomahawk sub for Iraq watch

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR, AND IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

BRITAIN'S first nuclear-powered submarine to be armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles is expected to be sent to the Gulf to join the aircraft carrier HMS *Invincible* which was ordered yesterday to leave for Iraq-watch duty after Christmas.

The announcement that the carrier, equipped with Sea Harriers and Sea King helicopters, is to return to the Gulf where it deployed earlier this year, was made by Tony Blair as he revealed details of last week's four-day air campaign against Iraq.

The probable involvement of HMS *Splendid*, the submarine which took part in successful test firings of Tomahawk missiles last month, was later disclosed by defence sources. The submarine will be operational early in the spring and is expected to be sent to the Gulf to add additional firepower to the British presence.

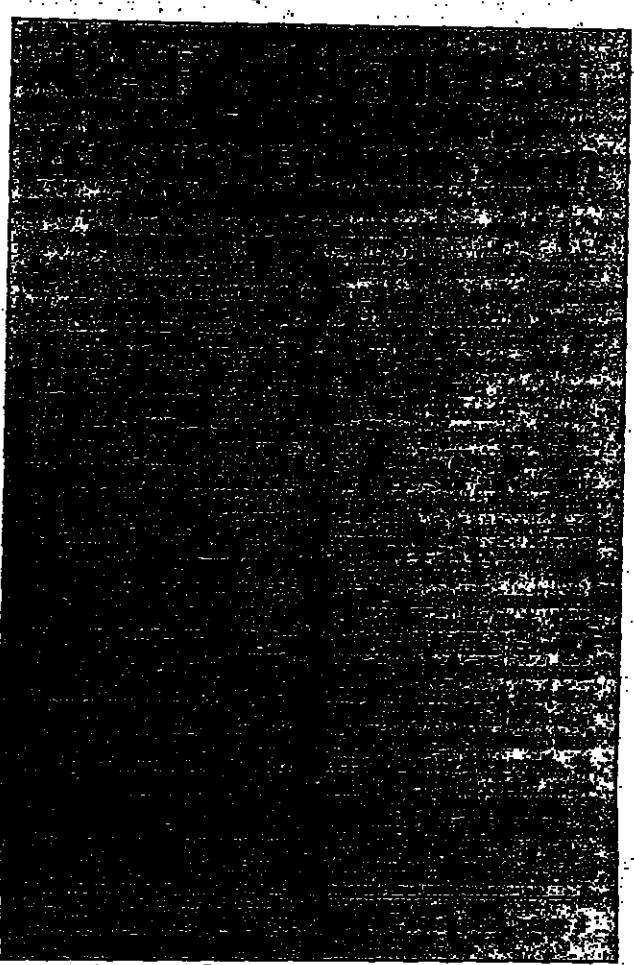
Although the Prime Minister in London and President Clinton in Washington insisted that Operation Desert Fox, which involved 72 hours of bombing, had severely damaged Iraq's military capabilities, both Governments acknowledged that they might need to use force again and that they intended to remain vigilant.

George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, said that when HMS *Invincible* arrived in the Gulf at the end of January, it would provide more firepower flexibility. Some of the Fornado GR1 bombers now in Kuwait, however, might return home depending on the security situation in the Gulf.

Yesterday RAF crews involved in Operation Desert Fox, expressed surprise that the raids had been called off after four days. Some of them were on their way to launch another bombing raid when they were told to return to their base in Kuwait. Pilots said there were targets left to hit.

However, there was relief elsewhere in the world that the raids were over, especially in Russia, where the lack of consultation by Washington prior to the launching of Operation Desert Fox caused anger and resentment.

The additional firepower of HMS *Splendid* in the Gulf



would guarantee a bigger role for Britain in any future military action against Iraq, although the Government has so far bought only 65 of the missiles from the United States.

Mr Robertson hinted at the possibility that RAF aircraft might become involved in special surveillance operations over Iraq to watch for signs of President Saddam Hussein attempting to rebuild the damaged facilities dedicated to developing weapons of mass destruction.

If, as Baghdad has threatened, the United Nations arms inspectors are not allowed back into Iraq, surveillance aircraft will have to take over the role of the weapons teams on the ground. At present American U2 spy planes fly surveillance missions over Iraq under the authority of the UN.

With much of Iraq's integrated air defence system now

damaged or destroyed by American and British bombs, the Prime Minister said yesterday: "We will intensify our surveillance and indeed are better able to carry it out as a result of the airstrikes in the past few days. We will know what is happening and whether Saddam is yet again getting in a position to threaten others. Our forces will remain ready to strike if necessary."

Senior officers at the Pentagon were already drafting plans yesterday for another series of airstrikes against Iraq early next year after the end of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month.

It was the start of Ramadan on Saturday which set the timetable for the limited airstrikes. The Pentagon had a more comprehensive list of about 250 targets but Mr Blair and Mr Clinton opted for a limited campaign of about 100 targets because of the time

available before Ramadan. No decision has been made about further airstrikes, but the fact that contingency plans are being made was seen as an acknowledgment that some of the damage caused by Operation Desert Fox could be repaired relatively quickly.

However, William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, said that Saddam's ballistic missile programme had been set back by "at least a year".

General Norman Schwarzkopf, the 1991 Gulf War commander, commented: "It's a wonderful display of air power, but until you occupy the ground you cannot declare victory."

The Iraqi leader, however, was quick to claim victory yesterday, as he did after his forces were defeated in 1991. He also thanked Iraq's friends "all over the world" for their support.

Nizar Hamdoon, the Iraqi Ambassador to the UN, claimed that thousands of people had been killed or wounded in the four days of raids. This was dismissed as propaganda in London, although it was acknowledged that there might have been some civilian casualties.

Mr Clinton and Mr Blair, who was criticised by the Opposition yesterday for failing to have a long-term strategy on Iraq, set out to persuade other governments of the need to tighten the sanctions against Baghdad.

Mr Blair said: "I recognise that not everyone around the world has welcomed this (military) action but I believe, at heart, most understand its necessity. Quite apart from its substantial military effect, it sends a clear message to Saddam Hussein that we will not sit by."

Mr Blair contacted Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, to discuss what further steps might be taken to put pressure on Saddam to comply with the Security Council resolution obliging the Iraqi leader to give up his weapons of mass destruction.

Blair defence, page 2
War machine, page 3
Saddam gloss, page 4
Leading article and Letters, page 17



President Clinton with his daughter, Chelsea, leaving the Foundry Methodist Church in Washington yesterday. A protester outside urged him to resign "for the good of the world". Mrs Clinton did not attend the service.

Senators hint at deal to spare Clinton from trial

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

FACED with President Clinton's insistence that he will not resign and polls showing that impeachment has made him more popular than ever, senior senators began moves yesterday to spare the country the ordeal of making him stand trial for high crimes and misdemeanours.

Senators of both sides expressed hopes that the scandal that has consumed Washington for almost a year could be resolved swiftly and in a civilised fashion. Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Senate judiciary committee hinted that a deal might be reached, perhaps involving censure of the President, which avoided the indignity of a trial.

A full trial before the 100 members of the Senate could involve the spectacle of Monica Lewinsky being asked explicit questions about her sexual activity with Mr Clinton to establish whether he lied



"I find it hard to believe in Clinton any more"

the Senate should "do a hard count" to see if 34 members would definitely vote against conviction and so render a trial pointless. The Senate, which has 55 Republican members and 45 Democrats, can vote at any time to adjourn the trial, which is expected to begin towards the end of next month.

"There are a variety of things we can do. I think we could come up with a way where everybody can vote on this, and vote their conscience, and it would be fair to all concerned, including the President," Mr Hatch said.

An NBC poll showed Mr Clinton's rating rise to 72 per cent from 68 per cent, and 62 per cent said he should serve out his term, up 11 points from a poll taken last Tuesday.

Anthony Howard, page 10
Hunt for adulterers, page 11
Leading article and Letters, page 17

GEOFF BROWN'S FILM OF THE YEAR



"A film that leapt off the screen, dazzling the eyes" Arts, page 33

TV & RADIO	38,39
WEATHER	20
CROSSWORDS	20,40
LETTERS	17
OBITUARIES	19
PETER RIDDELL	16
ARTS	33,34
CHESS & BRIDGE	30
COURT & SOCIAL	18
FASHION	14,15
BUSINESS	36-38,40
SPORT	21-32

IRA 'has no plans to disarm'

By MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE IRA is failing to make any discernible preparations for the downpayment of weaponry demanded by Unionists as the price of Sinn Fein's admission to government in February, according to RUC intelligence assessments.

Rosmie Flanagan, the Chief Constable, told *The Times* that he detected "no softening" in the IRA's position over recent months and the "critical

mass" of the republican movement remained "strongly opposed to any form of decommissioning at this stage."

A rare army convention two weeks ago had given the IRA's seven-man army council greater authority to act on its own initiative, but he did not believe it would change IRA policy on such a fundamental issue without the movement's clear support. Mr Flanagan be-

lieved, however, that external developments could yet sway the IRA. "Continuous positive movement in the political process, coupled with international pressure, would weigh very heavily in IRA thinking."

"The leadership of the republican movement is determined to avoid significant further splitting."

Interview, page 6

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OPERATION DESERT FOX: BLAIR'S BATTLE

Make-up can't quite hide worry lines over opening shots

THE image put on show at the Ministry of Defence yesterday to prove the effectiveness of the Iraqi bombing was pin-sharp and instantly recognisable, but had clearly been doctored, as war propaganda so often is. Tony Blair was wearing make-up.

Defence Staff, showed his war snags, consisting of three two-second video clips purporting to show British bombs hitting important targets with chilling precision. One looked remarkably like a raid on the surface of the Moon, and to the untutored eye the others might just as well have been staged on Salisbury Plain.

The strain was beginning to tell for the Prime Minister in his military debut, writes Alan Hamilton

But it was really Tony's show, with Robin Cook and George Robertson, dressed identically to their leader in dark suits, white shirts and restrained ties, sitting as mute makeweights on the rostrum as he held centre stage.

George was allowed a brief mention of his big toy, HMS Invincible, and Robin squeezed in a brief word about humanitarian aid, while General Guthrie was allowed to reel off figures of sorties flown and targets hit, accompanied by slightly vague maps.

Prime Minister adopted the more-in-sorrow-than-anger tone of a junior schoolmaster telling morning assembly that the very, very bad boy indeed in the lower fourth had had a sharp, painful caning. The trousers had been taken down and the bottom smacked very accurately and extremely hard exactly as planned, much harder than in previous punishments.

Blair is not Thatcher: there was no hint of rejoicing in his performance yesterday, beyond relief at the total absence of British and American casualties. But, compared with his predecessor's military adventure in the South Atlantic, the long-term outcome of Blair's Raid is infinitely less certain, and when wider matters were raised he appeared infinitely less confident.

He had no effective response to the threat that Russia and China might unilaterally end sanctions against Iraq, beyond suggesting lamely that it would not necessarily affect Britain's ability to keep its sanctions up.

He suggested, without total conviction, that the means of getting humanitarian aid to those in Iraq who really needed it might be in need of improvement.

Blair defends action to contain Iraq

By JILL SHERMAN CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

The Prime Minister yesterday put up a strong defence of Britain's role in the four-day war against President Saddam Hussein, claiming it was "grotesque and insulting" to suggest that the timing was connected with President Clinton's domestic problems.

TIMING OF AIRSTRIKES

fairs. I find that grotesque and I find it offensive," said Mr Blair. "I would never ever commit British servicemen and women unless I thought it was necessary to do. And I myself was insistent that we made sure the action was taken as quickly as possible after the Butler report."

"To link the timing to American affairs is insulting and grotesque"

Whitehall officials argued that the report had always been due to be published this month, if necessary to allow action before the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

At a press conference at the Ministry of Defence two hours later, the Prime Minister argued that the option to attack shortly after the Butler report was the only realistic one.

He emphasised that the military objectives were to degrade the ability of the regime of Saddam to build and use weapons of mass destruction and to diminish the threat that the Iraqi dictator posed to his neighbours.



Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, addresses a press conference in London at the weekend to describe the impact of four nights of British and American air raids and missile attacks on Iraq's military installations

Bombs shatter British image

By MICHAEL BINYON DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE bombs have stopped, the fighters have been grounded and President Saddam Hussein is trumpeting his "victory" across the Middle East. For the West, and particularly for Britain and America, there looms the challenge: can diplomacy pick up the pieces?

DIPLOMATIC FALLOUT

Britain's relations with Moscow have suffered, with the first ever recall of a Russian or Soviet Ambassador. There are dangerous implications for Kosovo, with a bitter Moscow unlikely to help the West in its dilemma over what to do. And President Milosevic, taking his cue from Saddam, may well conclude that thumping his nose at the West may lead to military retaliation but that he would win the long-term political struggle: an Anglo-American strike in the Balkans now comes at a

price almost unacceptably high to domestic opinion and the rest of Europe. Above all, the boast that Britain was one of the few countries able to project its influence through an efficient military machine and willingness to use it may suffer. The boast that Saddam has been "put back in his cage" will be challenged by those who say the military operation was no more than the "pinpricks" that military analysts counselled against: too short to affect Saddam's grip on power but intensive enough to be portrayed as an all-out military effort which Iraq survived.

President Chirac last night led a diplomatic effort to ease sanctions on Iraq and establish a new low-profile weapons inspection operation. In an intervention that signalled his determination to seize the initiative in the aftermath of the bombing raids, M Chirac said: "I am delighted that the raids have stopped, but naturally the problems remain."

Opting for a quiet life would raise the risks in Europe

By LAWRENCE FREEDMAN



The desert fox insignia on RAF pilots' uniform

THE lack of enthusiasm for Operation Desert Fox was palpable. Those who authorised it insisted they did so with reluctance and then faced an uphill battle trying to convince the public of its value. The background of the impeachment vote in Congress provided cynics with an easy gibe. The spectacle itself was hardly one to stir the heart: this was a clinical operation conducted by a technologically superior force. There was no reason to doubt that targets were destroyed, but fuzzy images of lumps disappearing in a puff of smoke had to compete with poignant images of injured children.

COMMENTARY

promise a decisive victory. The potential beneficiaries, either in Iraq or the rest of the Middle East, were either unable to speak out in support or else deemed it impolitic to do so. The best arguments for Desert Fox lay as much in what might have been the consequences of inaction as the achievements of action. If the report by Richard Butler, the head of the United Nations weapons inspectors (Unscop), on Iraqi non-compliance had been followed by no more than an awkward shrugging of the shoulders then Saddam would have been relieved and emboldened. President Clinton, no doubt, would have been chastised for being so obsessed with saving his own skin that he had failed to exert leadership. It is Saddam's staying power that

renders operations like this so frustrating. Airstrikes have been criticised because, short of a lucky hit, they cannot get rid of him. Few are willing to argue for a march on Baghdad. The essence of the Saddam problem is that one man has been able to organise a country on the basis of his own chronic insecurity. Brute force is his instrument of choice, whether dealing with subordinates or dissident sections of the Iraqi population or neighbouring countries.

This is the answer to the claim made by Simon Jenkins last Friday, that economic engagement is the best way of dealing with Saddam. The belief that there is always a non-violent counter to men of violence has been one of the great liberal delusions of this century. I agree with Jenkins that economic sanctions against Iraq have been counter-productive because they play to the strengths of his regime.

but it is wishful thinking to believe that their lifting would bring to an end his regime or turn it away from reliance on force. An alternative view is to accept that around the world all sorts of terrible things may be going on but that, in the end, they are none of our business. According to Matthew Parris last Saturday, for Britain Desert Fox was nothing more than a pathetic attempt to keep up with the Americans. We must therefore unburden ourselves of our great power delusions.

This goes to the heart of the issue in British foreign policy. It is tempting to opt for a quiet life. Britain has this option more than most. America has even more, for the world's troublespots are even further from its shores. This is an attitude of extraordinary shortsightedness. Events in the Middle East, the Balkans and Eastern Europe impinge directly on our security and prosperity. The interests at stake here are more European than American and to rely on Washington acting when none of its allies are ready to bestir themselves is most likely to result in American withdrawal, leaving this Continent unable to cope with the great dramas to come. Britain, of course, cannot solve the world's problems by itself but that does not mean that its only role is of deputy sheriff.

Women pilots fly into history

WHEN women pilots made military history by combat missions in the first Gulf War, it was a landmark moment. The women were not just flying the planes, they were also the ones who were being shot at. The women were not just flying the planes, they were also the ones who were being shot at. The women were not just flying the planes, they were also the ones who were being shot at.

IN the Weekend section of The Times on Saturday December 19, the photograph for the picture caption competition was of a member of the RAF display team, Flight Sergeant Rogoff, whose parachute failed to open when, dressed as Father Christmas, he made a jump at Aston Villa's ground. When the picture was chosen, we were unaware that Flight Sergeant Rogoff was still very seriously ill. We apologise to him and his family for the distress caused by the publication and to any readers offended by it. The competition has been cancelled.

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OPERATION DESERT FOX: HITS AND MISSES

Iraqi war machine 'crippled' by raids

OPERATION Desert Fox involved four nights of air strikes, 250 bombing raids lasting 72 hours, more than 400 cruise missile launches and nearly 100 targets hit. Not one American or British serviceman or woman was hurt.

Yesterday, in assessing the effectiveness of the air campaign against Iraq which involved 650 sorties, the United States and Britain declared after examining surveillance photographs that enough damage had been achieved to put back President Saddam Hussein's programme on weapons of mass destruction and other key elements of his war machine by several years.

However, Tony Blair admitted at a press conference at the Ministry of Defence that he and President Clinton had decided to go for a "limited" campaign because of the need to take immediate action after the publication of the damning report last week by Richard Butler, the head of the United Nations arms inspection team, and because of the approach of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting.

General Sir Charles Guthrie, Chief of the Defence



Michael Evans reports on the military assessment of 400 cruise missile attacks on 100 strategic targets

Staff, said at the same press conference that it was clear Saddam had made a "serious miscalculation". He had assumed that America would be preoccupied with domestic matters — the impeachment proceedings against Mr Clinton — and that no attack would be launched so close to Ramadan.

Mr Blair said that one option discussed with President Clinton had been to wait until Ramadan was over before launching airstrikes, but that would have given Saddam five weeks since the publication of the Butler report to prepare for the attacks.

The Pentagon and General Guthrie revealed that 93 targets had been hit, some of them several times. This appeared to underline the timing limitations imposed on Operation Desert Fox, because one of the Pentagon's optional list

of targets is understood to have covered more than 250 sites. Mr Blair insisted on Saturday, however, that the plan all along had been to restrict Desert Fox to four days, which still meant going into the start of Ramadan.

There were reports that Iraq might declare Ramadan a day earlier than other Muslim countries. However, in the end the air campaign broke the Ramadan deadline by only a few hours, with the first bombing being carried out before sunrise on Saturday.

General Guthrie, who has been in contact "almost on a daily basis" since mid-November with General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, outlined the bombing strategy. "Just as a modern car is useless with its engine electronics removed, so Saddam's military machine cannot function without a few

key elements. It is these critical components which we have been destroying.

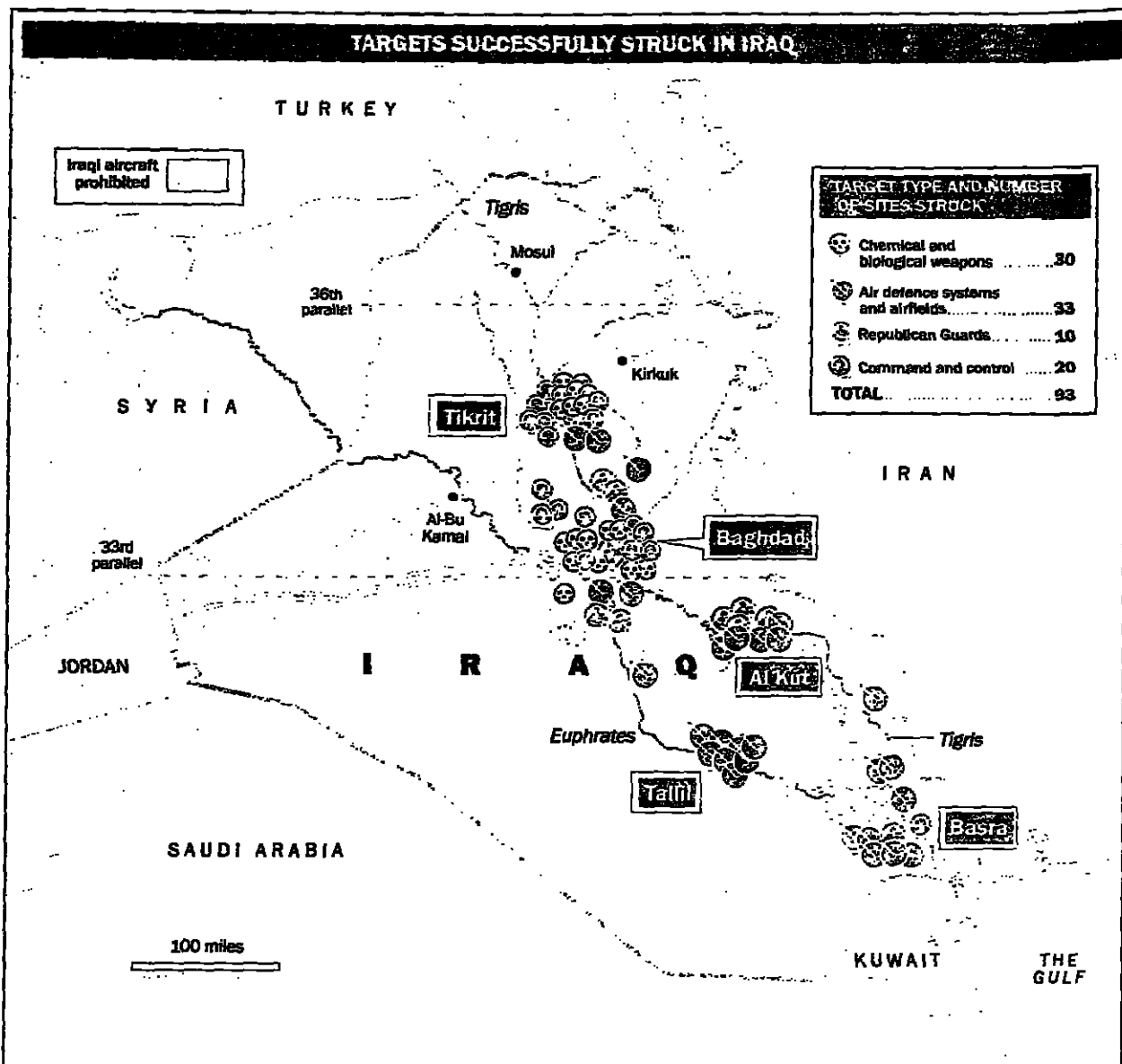
Saddam, he said, had a large conventional military force, consisting of 23 divisions and more than a million men under arms. To control them, and "to protect himself and his henchmen, he has hidden behind a highly sophisticated air defence system", working secretly on programmes to develop chemical and biological weapons.

As part of the bombing campaign, more than 30 sites which were central to Saddam's chemical and biological weapons efforts were attacked, including a factory which maintained his stocks of missiles, around Baghdad and Tikrit, the Iraqi leader's home town, north of the capital. One site that was reported to have been hit was the Jebel Makhoul nuclear and chemical warfare plant near Tikrit.

The airfields and hangars which house "what has become known as his Anthrax Air Force" were also hit. These, he said, were his Czech jet trainers, called L29s, which had been converted into remote-controlled drones to carry special aerosol equipment to spread deadly anthrax on his enemies. "I believe we have set back Saddam's capacity to deliver these terrible weapons by missile or drone aircraft by several years."

Showing a video clip of the moment when one hangar containing an L29 was hit, he said: "This soft-skinned hangar was the facility for the L29 'drone of death'. I think you can clearly see that no aircraft will be flying from there for quite a while."

Defence sources said that B52 bombers had targeted the Baath Party headquarters in a suburb of Baghdad because it was known to contain computers and equipment related to Saddam's chemical and biological weapons programme. The walls of the building, they said, were "very thick" to withstand attacks. "But the air-launched cruise missiles went



Deck hands on USS Enterprise, the aircraft carrier, turn their attentions to routine cleaning in the Gulf yesterday after President Clinton halted airstrikes against Iraq.

through the roof and would have caused huge damage to the internal walls of the buildings," they said. General Guthrie listed other targets: more than 30 "critical" facilities controlling the integrated air defences in southern Iraq, 20 sites which Saddam used to control his conventional war machine, and ten facilities used by the Republican Guards and their "sinister inner organisations such as the Special Republican Guard" that prop up the regime of Saddam.

General Guthrie said: "We have sent a powerful message to the Republican Guards which Saddam kept out of harm's way during the Gulf War. They know that their cosy existence has now been shattered. We can reach out and strike them." Defence sources said later that there

would have been casualties among the Republican Guards, because not all had dispersed by the time of the first night's raids.

One video clip showed a Republican Guard armoured brigade headquarters being destroyed. It contained communi-

cations equipment "necessary to deploy and direct the brigade" which controlled up to 100 of Saddam's most capable tanks, including Russian T72s. Although Iraq fired anti-aircraft guns, especially in Baghdad, not one surface-to-air missile was launched against the US and British bombers. How-

ever, this was because on the first night of the raids, the Iraqis were caught by surprise, and many of the key air defence sites, including the Sam missile facilities, were successfully targeted, putting the radar that controls the missiles out of action. The Sam 3s,

In Washington, General Shelton gave details of three targets, showing photographs of buildings with large holes where bombs had crashed through the roofs. The first was a missile repair facility at Taji, 20 miles north of Baghdad, where the Iraqis used to repair all their surface-to-air missiles and also to develop ballistic missiles.

The second was the Zaafaraniyah facility where Iraq made components and designed machine tools for military equipment. The third was at Shahiyah, where rocket and missile engines were tested.

rienced. I would have to report to the Prime Minister this morning that we would have severe difficulties mounting any substantial offensive or defensive operation." He concluded: "By any measure I count that as success."

General Guthrie summed up the results of Operation Desert Fox by saying: "If we had been on the receiving end of the kind of campaign that Saddam Hussein has just experienced, I would have to report to the Prime Minister this morning that we would have severe difficulties mounting any substantial offensive or defensive operation." He concluded: "By any measure I count that as success."

'Saddam would have difficulty mounting any offensive operation'

General Guthrie said: "We have sent a powerful message to the Republican Guards which Saddam kept out of harm's way during the Gulf War. They know that their cosy existence has now been shattered. We can reach out and strike them." Defence sources said later that there

could operate up to 60,000ft, were specifically targeted to remove a potent threat for the allied aircraft. General Guthrie summed up the results of Operation Desert Fox by saying: "If we had been on the receiving end of the kind of campaign that Saddam Hussein has just experienced, I would have to report to the Prime Minister this morning that we would have severe difficulties mounting any substantial offensive or defensive operation." He concluded: "By any measure I count that as success."

Women pilots fly into history

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

AMERICAN women pilots made military history by flying combat missions for the first time during Operation Desert Fox. Three of them piloted fighters that were launched for raids over Iraq from the deck of the carrier USS Enterprise in the Gulf. But they shrugged off its significance. Lieutenant Kendra Williams, 26, from Alaska, who flew her F18 on two bombing missions, insisted it was "not a big deal". The women declined to give interviews to American reporters on the carrier because they did not want to stand apart from their male squadron mates. They consider themselves navy aviators first and foremost, "a naval official said at the Pentagon."

He confirmed it was the first time women aviators had launched and fired weapons. A change in Pentagon policy allowing women to fly combat missions was made in 1993, two years after the Gulf War. Since then, women pilots have logged thousands of hours flying patrols over Bosnia and the "no-fly" zones of Iraq.

Other women involved in last week's bombardment flew and operated Proxmire aircraft that employed electronic countermeasures to jam President Saddam Hussein's radar sites and surface-to-air missiles. More women pilots were serving on the second carrier, USS Carl Vinson, which arrived on Friday, and with the US Air Force, but the Pentagon did not have a precise tally. Throughout the US Navy there are some 250 women pilots, and more than 50,000 women on active duty make up about 15 per cent of the Navy's total force.

Iraq skilled at keeping deadly arsenal on the move to evade discovery

By MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE EDITOR

DESPITE the claims in Washington and London yesterday that the air campaign had achieved its objectives, there remain fears that President Saddam Hussein's ability to "disperse and deceive" will have left much of his key equipment untouched by American and British guided bombs.

Although Tony Blair warned the Iraqi leader yesterday that Britain and America were prepared to use force again if he tried to restart his weapons of mass destruction programme, no one doubts that Saddam will have managed to disperse chemical and biological equipment before the start of the bombings.

George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, told The Times last night that Saddam used schools and hospitals to hide production equipment and computers related to his secret programmes. "And obviously we couldn't target schools and hospitals," he said.



Children in Baghdad examine the remains of the entrance to the Labour Ministry building yesterday

Nor could they target storage sites suspected of concealing nerve agents and anthrax because of the risk of causing a lethal fallout that would have killed civilians.

So instead, the decision was taken to attack the key command structures and Republican Guard facilities that were

WHAT SADDAM HAS LEFT

known to be connected to the chemical and biological warfare programme. But after seven years of trying to discover Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations arms inspectors have learned that the Iraqi leader, with the help of a huge organisation in the Republican Guards dedicated to protecting his chemical and biological systems, is expert at evasion.

Khidhir Hamza, an Iraqi nuclear scientist who defected to the United States in 1995, has revealed that the Republican

Guards moved material all around the country and that on one memorable occasion packed valuable equipment in date palm groves near a technical college. The announcement by Saddam last week, just before the start of the Anglo-American air campaign, that he was dividing Iraq into four military regions, was a signal that a plan for a nationwide dispersal programme was under way.

Scott Ritter, the American official who resigned from the UN Special Commission (Unsc) on Iraq in August, told The New York Times yesterday that the Iraqi Military Industrial Commission had an emergency dispersal plan.

He said: "The commission has an evacuation plan for each facility. It runs an emergency operation centre... [it is] linked in with an organisation called the joint committee, which is run by the presidential secretary." Saddam ruthlessly uses civilians to hide some of his most precious war equipment and files.

Exiled Iraqis have claimed that Saddam's henchmen turn up and demand that ordinary citizens look after military equipment in their homes, until the danger of a UN arms inspection — or a bombing raid — is over.

Similarly, the Republican Guards do not keep their Russian T72 tanks in obvious depots or barracks but disperse them across the country to avoid being targeted. Mr Ritter said that the last time he had inspected one particular Republican Guard barracks which was destroyed in the latest raids, the buildings contained just "old uniforms, expired ammunition, food supplies, derelict bedding and smelly latrines".

One vital part of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction programme can never be destroyed. That is the knowledge and technological expertise which Iraqi scientists and engineers have built up over the years, much of it acquired by Iraqi postgraduate students doing courses in microbiology at British, American and other European universities.

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OPERATION DESERT FOX: PROPAGANDA WAR

Saddam puts gloss on four days of strikes

A HAGGARD but defiant President Saddam Hussein predictably claimed victory yesterday as the Arab world breathed a collective sigh of relief that America and Britain had ended the heaviest air-strikes on Iraq for eight years.

Despite his destroyed palaces and shattered command centres, the bombing had backfired politically by splitting the international community and winning wide Arab sympathy for Iraq, according to commentators in the region.

The theme was at the heart of a taped televised address by the Iraqi leader to his people. "God rewarded you and delighted your hearts with the crown of victory," he declared. He went on to thank Iraq's friends "all over the world". Britain and America were not mentioned by name but Saddam referred to them as "infidels" and "enemies of Islam".

His triumphal tone had a less hollow ring than usual. Airstrikes were narrowly averted on three previous occasions over the past 13 months when he caved in to Washington's demands at the eleventh hour. This time he had refused to blink and had emerged as uncompromising as ever.

The bombing gave the Iraqi leader, determined to keep his weapons of mass destruction, the opportunity finally to end seven years of intrusive inspections. "The commission of spies is behind us," his Vice-President, Taha Yassin Ramadan, declared hours before the ceasefire was announced. "The time for diplomacy is

Defiant leader declares end to UN inspections, reports Michael Theodoulou

over. We will not accept any conditions. Everything in the past is now behind us."

Some opposition groups were encouraged that the bombing had targeted the pillars of Saddam's repressive regime, signalling Washington's

BAGHDAD

desire to topple him. However, there was no early sign that his grip on power had been weakened by the targeting of the Republican Guards and the Special Republican Guards.

Other dissidents said Operation Desert Fox had only increased the misery of ordinary Iraqis while leaving a wounded Saddam ready to crush possible unrest with increased determination. "They will be facing Saddam as an injured wolf who will drastically increase his reign of terror over the coming weeks to make up for the losses he may have sustained and to silence any dissent to his rule," a spokesman for the Islamic Daawa Party, a Shia opposition group, said. Iraqi officials took foreign re-

porters to the southern city of Basra yesterday in an attempt to discredit reports that army units in the area had mutinied during the bombardment. "The whole thing was very ill-advised," said Aburish, a Palestinian author who is writing a biography of the Iraqi leader, told *The Times*. "The bombing had no specific aim. Saddam has been defanged for some time. They keep talking about the threat to Iraq's neighbours, but have you heard any of them saying they are worried Iraq will attack them?" He added: "In order to get rid of Saddam you have to give people on the ground an incentive. Don't bomb them. Pull back and say, 'If he goes, you can export all the oil you want to rebuild the country.'"

Washington now appears committed to working with the Iraqi National Congress, a coalition of opposition groups based in London. A sum of £60 million has been earmarked under the recent Iraqi Liberation Act to provide military equipment and training.

The rebels propose a gradual approach, beginning with the establishment of a liberated enclave in the restive Shia south of the country that would attract disaffected Iraqi troops. As the rebels succeed, territory under their control swells, enabling them to gain the confidence of Western backers who have viewed them as too divided to be a credible threat to Saddam.

But Washington has been silent on the rebels' key demand to back the "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq, policed by US and British warplanes, with a "no-drive zone" to keep out Saddam's tanks and artillery. America's allies in the region are deeply suspicious of the plan.

Saudi Arabia, fearing its own Shia minority opposes the use of southern Iraq as a springboard to dislodge Saddam. Turkey, with its rebellious Kurds, has no desire to see the Kurds of northern Iraq used to launch an insurrection against Baghdad. Saddam's enemies say Washington will have to do more to convince them it has a coherent strategy to oust him.

□ Cairo: An Iraqi opposition group, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, said a cousin of Saddam, an ex-Defence Minister, Ali Hassan al-Majid, who commands the military in the south, executed several officers for disobeying orders. (AP)



British pilots relaxing at their base close in Kuwait yesterday after four days of airstrikes. Some were dejected by the order to stop bombing

'We stopped the bombing too soon'

FROM DANIEL MCGRORY IN KUWAIT CITY

RAF RECALL

RAF crews felt "surprised and dejected" when Operation Desert Fox was halted while they were in mid-air and just minutes from bombing targets deep inside Iraq.

The order came as they were flying through the fiercest bombardment yet from Iraqi missiles and anti-aircraft batteries which the crews say proves that President Saddam Hussein still possesses a formidable armory.

Standing by his Tornado jet yesterday, one pilot summed up the mood saying: "We stopped the bombing too soon. We know there were targets we still had to hit."

At their desert airbase in Kuwait, Mark, the formation leader of the last four British Tornados to take off, told of the "stunning moment" when he heard the four words that recalled their mission.

"We had gone off just before midnight and were 15 minutes into the flight, holding just on the border when the radio crackled and the voice said simply, 'The package is cancelled.'"

"I knew what that code meant but didn't believe it, so asked my navigator if I had got it right and asked base to authenticate it. We must have waited 30 seconds or so, and were saying to each other something must have gone wrong."

"When it was repeated I radioed the message to the other three planes in the formation. As they acknowledged, I could hear the total disappointment in their voices."

Mark, 35, from Bristol, said: "I felt dejected. We were fired up, we were carrying bombs, closing fast on our tar-

get which was less than 20 minutes away, and you just feel a sense of utter frustration and disbelief."

"After the coded recall the base asked me what I was going to do now. I said, 'Dump my fuel and go home if it's all the same to you', and I looked back over my shoulder to Iraq and where we should have been doing our job."

Their intended target was again the main Republican Guard barracks of Al Kut, just south of Baghdad, which his navigator, Lawrie, described as "an incredible size, at least four times

decided Saddam had been punished enough. "That, thankfully, is a political judgement and not one I have to make," Captain Burroughs said yesterday shortly after he read a message of congratulations from the Prime Minister to his squadron.

Late on Saturday night the first wave of four Tornados had dropped all their eight Paveway 2,000lb bombs and returned safely just as Whitehall officials contacted the commander.

"I guessed then what was about to happen," he said. "Someone from the Defence Minister's office called, gave

his pilot, at 40 one of the oldest in the formation, said: "I don't know if we have made a difference in a few days. I don't know if it will have changed things in Iraq but I don't think it will."

"Sandman", 36, a navigator from Essex, said: "There probably were Iraqi Republican Guard casualties from our attacks, but what we have done probably won't sink in until we get home and back to our families."

It was this formation which attacked the hangar, hiding what George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, called "the troves of death" — the pilotless aircraft that could have delivered lethal anthrax spores.

Sandman described how they destroyed an ammunition storage area. "I watched the bombs go down and burst and saw the flames. It was a very satisfying moment. The first bomb-bombing home was then three minutes later it went up with a huge blast and the sky was lit up by what looked like a mushroom shape of orange light."

Kate Ansell, 30, a squadron intelligence officer, said: "I was so pleased to see those planes land safely, as three of the crew had handed me letters for their families if anything went wrong. There were no tears or anything last night mainly because we know it's not really over."

□ Relief at home: Families of RAF servicemen last night celebrated the end of the hazardous bombing raids over Iraq with a carol service at their base in Lossiemouth (Shirley English writes). Children, wives, girlfriends and parents gathered at St Aidan's Church to give thanks that the lives of their loved ones had been spared.

As the four jets screamed back to the base they were met by disbelieving ground crews

the size of Heathrow". Lawrie, 34, who flew 25 sorties in the 1991 Gulf War, said: "We knew this was a limited campaign but we expected to see a few more days' action yet."

"I then had to tell the eight crew who were just about to get into their planes for our scheduled third wave that they wouldn't be needed. They looked at me in disbelief."

The third night of operations saw Saddam offer his strongest retaliation yet. A 37-year old navigator — part of the successful first wave — said: "I was shocked by the intensity of the anti-aircraft fire. For a finite time, maybe only a couple of seconds, I was like a rabbit caught in headlights of a car. But then we got to the target and hit it."

me the order, and then listened on the line to the pilots' chat as the four planes in the air landed back safely. Only after that was Tony Blair going to announce it officially.

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Iraqis in Baghdad listen to radio news at the end of the raids, after which celebrations broke out

Journalists denounce Arafat's censors

By CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ARAB REACTION

LEADING international media organisations yesterday denounced draconian attempts by Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority to censor the reporting of pro-Iraqi demonstrations that have swept through self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Their action came as Israel's Cabinet voted yesterday to suspend the Wye peace deal until Palestinians meet conditions set by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister. Today he faces a Knesset confidence vote which could bring about the Government's defeat.

The pro-Saddam protests among the 2.5 million Palestinians in the territories still controlled overall by Israel were

matched by violent pro-Saddam riots across the Arab world, with US and British property the target of attacks by mobs in Syria. Last night, the Syrian Foreign Ministry apologised for Saturday's violence and promised to improve security around the US and British missions. But no mention was made of compensation for damage incurred, including that inflicted on books and furniture in the offices of the British Council.

The London-based Al-Hayat paper reported that an extreme Islamic militant group, Islamic Jihad-Vanguards of Conquest, had threatened to avenge the American and British air attacks on Iraq. Eight

Palestinian journalists in Gaza affiliated with the American ABC, the French Antenne 2 and the German ARD television networks were held after filming the burning of US flags in contravention of an order from Mr Arafat, who is embarrassed in the wake of President Clinton's de facto support for a Palestinian state.

The Gaza offices of Associated Press, the US news agency, were also seized by the Palestinian security forces for the same reason. In the West Bank, five local Palestinian television stations were also shut to prevent their coverage of the pro-Saddam protests, which often turned violent. The bans were lifted after

the end of Operation Desert Fox was announced, but Mahad TV in Bethlehem refused to reopen until it was given a more complete explanation for the closure order. Samir Musia, the station's owner, said: "They have to give me a logical explanation: until then I will stay closed."

In a letter to Mr Arafat, the Tel-Aviv based Foreign Press Association, which represents 250 journalists and television organisation from all over the world, said of the closure of the AP office in Gaza: "President Clinton himself would be most dismayed to learn that his country's main news outlet has been banned from operating in an area to which he has paid such a significant visit."

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists

also protested against the curbs on coverage. It urged Mr Arafat to allow the offices to reopen and denounced "attempts to silence independent journalism in violation of the right to free expression."

The Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate said in a statement that the closing of offices and the detention of the journalists was a violation of their basic rights. It said its members would strike and stage a sit-in at the Palestinian Legislature in Ramallah today.

A common theme of the Arab protests, which Arab diplomats believe would have become much more serious had the raids on Iraq continued further into Ramadan, was that all Arabs, not just Saddam, were being targeted by the US and British attacks.



Members of the Jordanian opposition wave an Israeli flag with "Down with Israel" written on it during an Amman demonstration in protest against the airstrikes

'Thatcher was right — Europe is blind and cowardly' Neighbour's confidence turns again to fear



Zeffirelli: scenario "same as 50 years ago"

LIKE every person of goodwill, all those men and women who care for democracy, the defence of freedom and the preservation of our civilisation and indeed humanity itself, I cannot refrain from expressing my concern and indignation at the irresponsible confusion caused by the attitude of many European countries towards a man like President Saddam Hussein.

Europe's failure to act in the Iraq crisis has made Franco Zeffirelli, the stage and film director, ashamed to be European

tion ran at the time of Hitler, to those events and actions that led to the horrors inflicted by the Nazis. At the time, the world was shamefully divided over the crisis and it was only because of the moral conviction and forceful actions of the Anglo-Saxon peoples that mankind was saved.

Again today, it is the British and the Americans who stand alone to ensure the survival of humanity and world freedom.

I cannot help but remember with deepest admiration the powerful words of Margaret Thatcher who, when faced with the "dream" of a united Europe — which from the first was riven with discord — re-

minded us that the Anglo-Saxons had, throughout history received nothing from Europe but problems, threats and mortal danger and that it was due only to Britain and America that the world had been saved.

I hope with all my heart that military action against Iraq will destroy once and for all this infamous character and so open to his unhappy people a future of democracy and freedom. But at the same time the affair brings to our attention the unspeakable confusion that exists in Europe and elsewhere in the world at a time when every civilised nation ought, without the least confusion, to express what so clearly and promptly is advocated yet again

only by Britain and America. We have reasons to be ashamed that Europe has not learnt anything from the painful lessons of the past and still leaves those who saved us 50 years ago to stand alone, assigning them to do our dirty work, saving our children from elimination through chemical and biological warfare.

I am sincerely ashamed to be a European, to come from the same continent as France, Germany, Italy and Russia. Is it conceivable that not one of them has felt the urgency to join with the same nations that rescued us and that once again are saving us, putting at risk the lives of their men and women? How proud I would be if at this historic moment we had been at their side, fighting as one against an evil foe.

Baroness Thatcher was right: Europe is always blind, cowardly, ungrateful, incorrigible — a continent without hope.

By DANIEL MCGRORY

KUWAIT

THE shoppers bunched together in front of the giant television screen in the polished marble mall watching Tony Blair call off Operation Desert Fox. They looked baffled at the Prime Minister's conviction that Saddam Hussein was "back in his cage" and could not menace them again.

A handful of Kuwaitis stayed long enough to listen to all of Mr Blair's explanation, though most quickly gathered up their children and hurried to their cars fearful of what comes next.

For the four days of airstrikes Kuwaitis were in uncharacteristically confident mood that they might be rid of their neighbour's threats. Unlike previous crises, only a few had rushed to the air-

port to escape. There was no panic buying, no sudden dash to empty the banks of dollars. Most concede that is because the speed of this aerial attack caught them by surprise. The stock market soared.

For the first time since the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the Kuwaitis felt secure and they luxuriated in watching pictures of Baghdad being pounded on successive nights. One businessman said: "It is good to see Baghdad feeling afraid for once. Usually it is us."

But a Kuwaiti official confessed last night: "We feel more vulnerable than when Desert Fox began. The US Marines are going to be pulled back from the border, so who is watching Saddam?"

THE TIMES MONDAY DECEMBER 21 1998
Police today
mother
Driver's after lor
Minder Churchill

Police hunt for toddler after mother's killing

By Stewart Tendler
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

POLICE began a nationwide hunt yesterday for the two-year-old daughter of a young mother who was stabbed and beaten to death in her home.

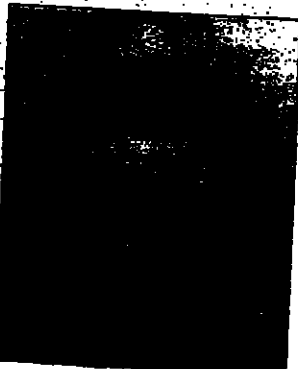
Sharon Lester, 24, was found by her mother, lying in a ground-floor room in her terraced home in Ling Street, in the Kensington area of Liverpool. She had been dead for at least 48 hours, but neither she nor her daughter, Jade, had been seen for a week.

Police are trying to discover the identity and whereabouts of the girl's father. They also want to trace two men seen at the dead woman's house with a white van two hours before the body was found on Saturday afternoon.

Detective Superintendent Russ Walsh, who is leading the investigation, said he hoped that the child had been left with someone who was not aware of what had happened to her mother.

Jade and her mother, who was unemployed, were close and had an "excellent relationship", he said. The child attended a local nursery, but had not been seen there for a week. She and her mother were last seen at a neighbour's house at midnight on December 12.

Mr Walsh said: "There is a distinct possibility that this little girl is in the safe hands of somebody who has been told whatever story and she thinks there is nothing untoward."



Jade last seen with her mother on December 12

He said that police were keen to speak to anybody who may know Jade, particularly people who worked in the medical profession: doctors, health visitors and, in particular, people from nurseries, who may have seen Jade during the week.

There have been reported sightings in the past week, but police are not satisfied with them. Mr Walsh said he did not believe that Jade had been killed because she had seen the murder. Her mother had no known connections with crime and, at present, the murder was being treated as a motiveless attack.

Police are interviewing Miss Lester's boyfriend, John Park, an unemployed joiner, who was traced yesterday. Miss Lester's mother is also helping police to make an inventory of the contents of the house to determine if anything has been stolen. There were no signs that it had been searched. Po-

lice are also trying to find a white box-type van with roller shutters at the rear that was in Ling Street at around 12.30pm on Saturday. Detectives have been told that a man in his 20s left from Miss Lester's house and signalled to the driver of the van to take it round to the alley behind the house.

Police also want to trace a man who was in Ling Street repairing a yellow van at the same time, in the hope that he might have seen something in Ling Street yesterday. June Joel, 41, recalled hearing Miss Lester's mother scream when she found her daughter's body. "She went next door and when the police car arrived she came out on the pavement and seemed to collapse." She said that Miss Lester and her daughter had been living in the street for about seven months. At one time a man had been living with her and then moved out.



Joella at her christening yesterday. "It was a nice service. I really enjoyed it," she said

Baptism begins Joella's new life

By A CORRESPONDENT

A CHILD of ten, whose family battled for years to have her officially recognised as a girl, has been christened with her new name.

Joella Holliday was wrongly registered as a boy on her birth certificate after a rare medical condition made it difficult to determine her gender. After an operation at the age of 18 months, she clearly became a girl, but, until this month, her family were refused permission to change her name officially from Joel.

Her new life began yesterday with a simple 20-minute service at St Mary's Church in her home village of Pinchbeck, near Spalding, Lincolnshire.

"I'm just pleased it's all been sorted out," Joella said af-

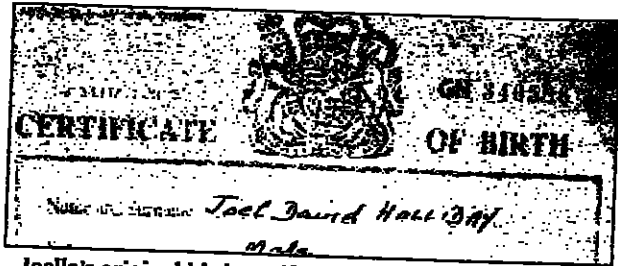
terwards. "It was a nice service. I really enjoyed it."

Joella was accompanied by her mother, Julia Farmer, her stepfather, Jason, and her half-brother, Jarred, 6.

Ms Farmer said: "I still can't believe all this has worked out... the news that her birth certificate is going to be changed was just so unexpected. It was a lovely service and unique. Joella did very well."

Dianne Miller, the local solicitor who represented the family in their legal fight, was one of four godparents.

About 30 close friends and family were invited to the service, which was specially written by the vicar, the Rev David Hill, and approved by the Bishop of Grantham.



Joella's original birth certificate. She now has a new one



Kathryn Learner with the car that went under a lorry

Driver saw stars after lorry crash

By Tim Jones

A DRIVER told of her escape yesterday after the roof of her car was sliced off when it shot beneath a lorry that was blocking her way on a dark country road.

Kathryn Learner, 25, was left looking at the stars when she emerged from the other side of the lorry. Miss Learner, a customer services officer, was driving home through Small Dole, West Sussex, to change for her office Christmas party when the lorry loomed before her.

Screaming, she slammed on her brakes and swerved to try to avoid it before closing her eyes and ducking as her Peugeot 306 disappeared beneath the trailer, which confronted her sideways.

She thought she was facing certain death and was staggered when she emerged on the other side with only a few cuts and bruises.

Moments after the accident, which happened at the weekend, a 57-year-old man and his wife were taken to hospital after their car crashed into the lorry. The woman, who had to be cut from the wreckage, suffered broken bones in her feet.

while her husband was treated for shock and bruising.

Miss Learner, who lives in Woodmanocote, West Sussex, said: "I remember screaming as I went under the lorry and then just waiting for it all to stop. I opened my eyes, looked up and there were sky and stars above me."

"The truck was like a wall in the road in front of me. I tried to swerve round it to the right, but the lorry was still in my view. I then knew I was going to hit it and just ducked down, shut my eyes and heard the impact of the glass smashing around me."

When she got out of the car, it looked as if it had been attacked by a giant tin opener. "Thank God I was the only one in the car as normally I give my boyfriend a lift home. It was the most frightening experience of my life. When I saw the damage to the car it brought it all home to me. I couldn't believe I came out of that crash alive, let alone unharmed."

Inspector Derek Smith, of Sussex Police, said: "It must have been absolutely terrifying for her. It was an incredible escape."

Minder at whom Churchill scowled

By Alan Hamilton

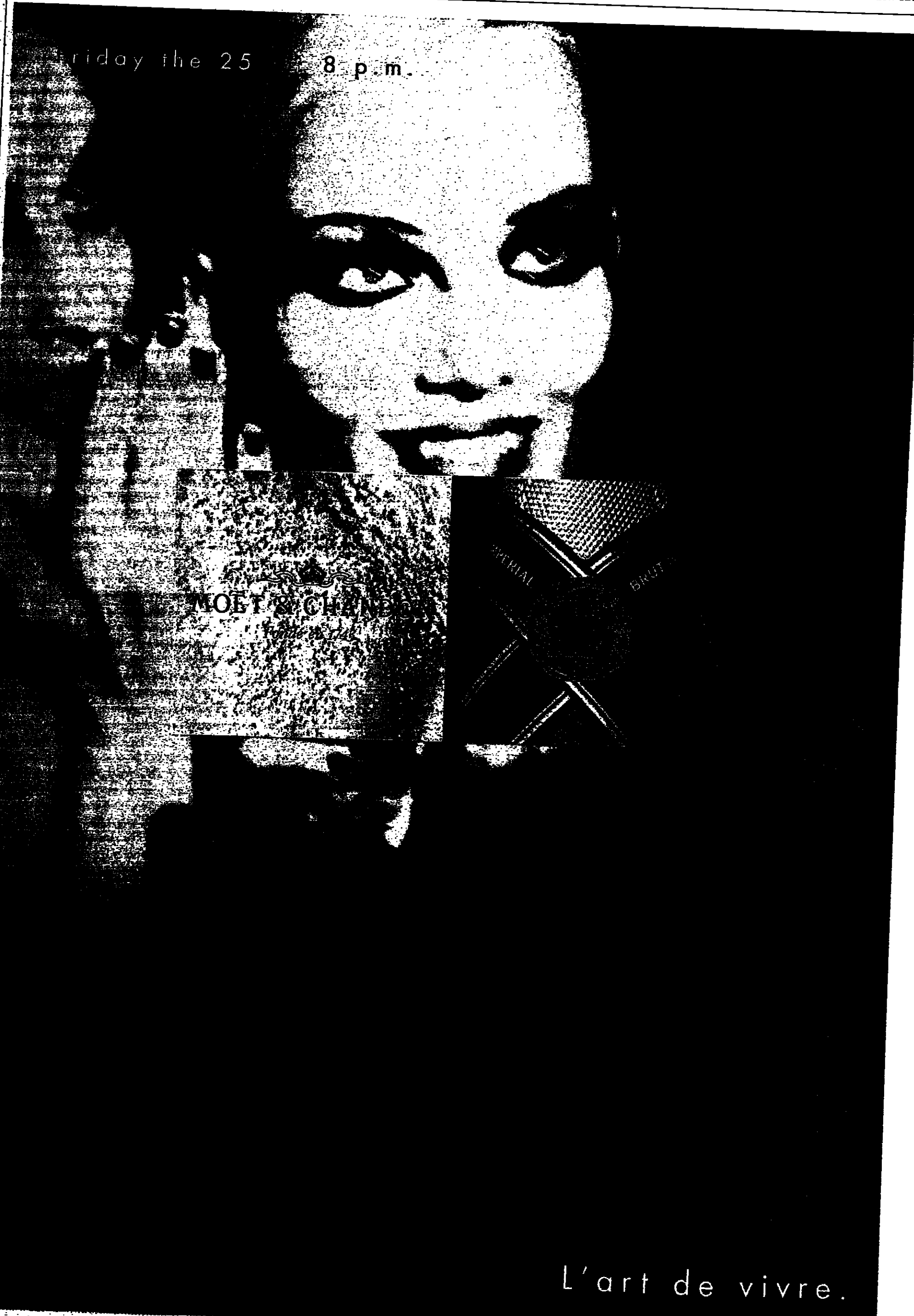
THE former chief bodyguard to Sir Winston Churchill has been found dead after a fire at his home in Ringwood, Hampshire, thought to have been caused by a faulty fan heater.

Kingston Pennell, who was 91, headed Churchill's personal security team, which was recruited from Scotland Yard during the latter years of the war. In an interview in the late 1940s, after he had retired from the post, Captain Pennell, a former army officer, recalled: "Winston never smiled at me once, but he used to scowl in my general direction every morning."

Churchill was often moody and mercurial, depending on the time of day and the progress of the war. In a partic-

ularly good humour during a wartime conference in Quebec, he watched with amusement as another of his bodyguards fell out of his canoe into a freezing lake. "What are you trying to do, Thompson, commit suicide?" he shouted across the water with obvious mirth.

With the return of peace, Pennell retired into relative obscurity, emerging only once, eight years ago, to settle a debt of honour by paying a Gurkha's poll tax bill. He paid £337 to the youngest recruit in the regiment because, he explained, a Nepalese soldier had once saved him from being shot by a British sentry in 1943, when he forgot a pass-



L'art de vivre.

Sick Branson keeps epic flight on course

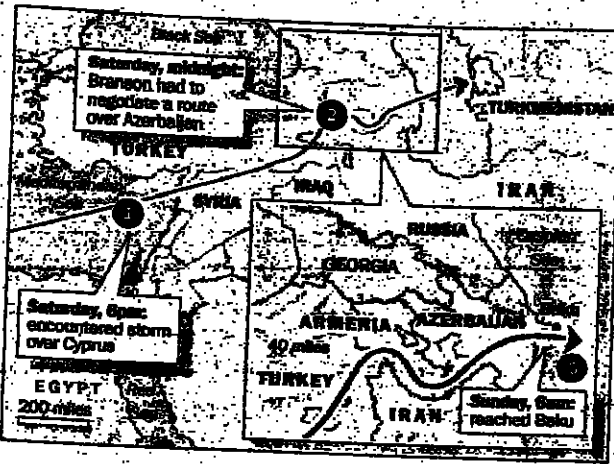
By SUSIE STEINER

RICHARD BRANSON overcame illness to take the helm of his balloon yesterday and fly it through a perilous 25-mile corridor between Russia and Iran.

The Virgin tycoon, who is suffering from dry lung and was put on a course of antibiotics, steered the vast ICO Global Challenger from midnight until dawn, weaving it between two no-fly zones.

The feat left Branson "tired and emotional", according to the project director, Mike Kendrick, at the control base in West London. "We had to thread the balloon through the eye of a needle. Flying it is like driving a supertanker — it takes a long time for it to respond. We missed the tip of Iran by seven miles and then missed Russia by ten miles. I have been ballooning for 30 years and it was the most remarkable piece of manoeuvring I have ever seen. It's almost impossible to do."

Branson and his co-pilots, Steve Fossett and Per Lindstrand, were on target to fly



over India early this morning and on to the next hurdle — the Himalayas — in their attempt to be the first to circumnavigate the world.

The ZOR balloon, flying on a mixture of helium and hot air at 29,000ft, has met a series of near-crises since take-off on Friday morning. As it neared Libya at midnight, Colonel Gaddafi suddenly withdrew permission to fly over.

In response, Branson wrote a personal message to Gadd-

afi, which was e-mailed from the capsule and faxed directly to the Libyan leader. Permission was finally granted and the balloon entered Libyan air space at 1am. "It was an horrific start," Mr Kendrick said.

The ICO Global Challenger, travelling in a sub-tropical jet-stream at about 70mph, then flew over the Mediterranean to Cyprus, where it hit an unexpected storm, at around 6pm on Saturday night.

Fossett, who was piloting at

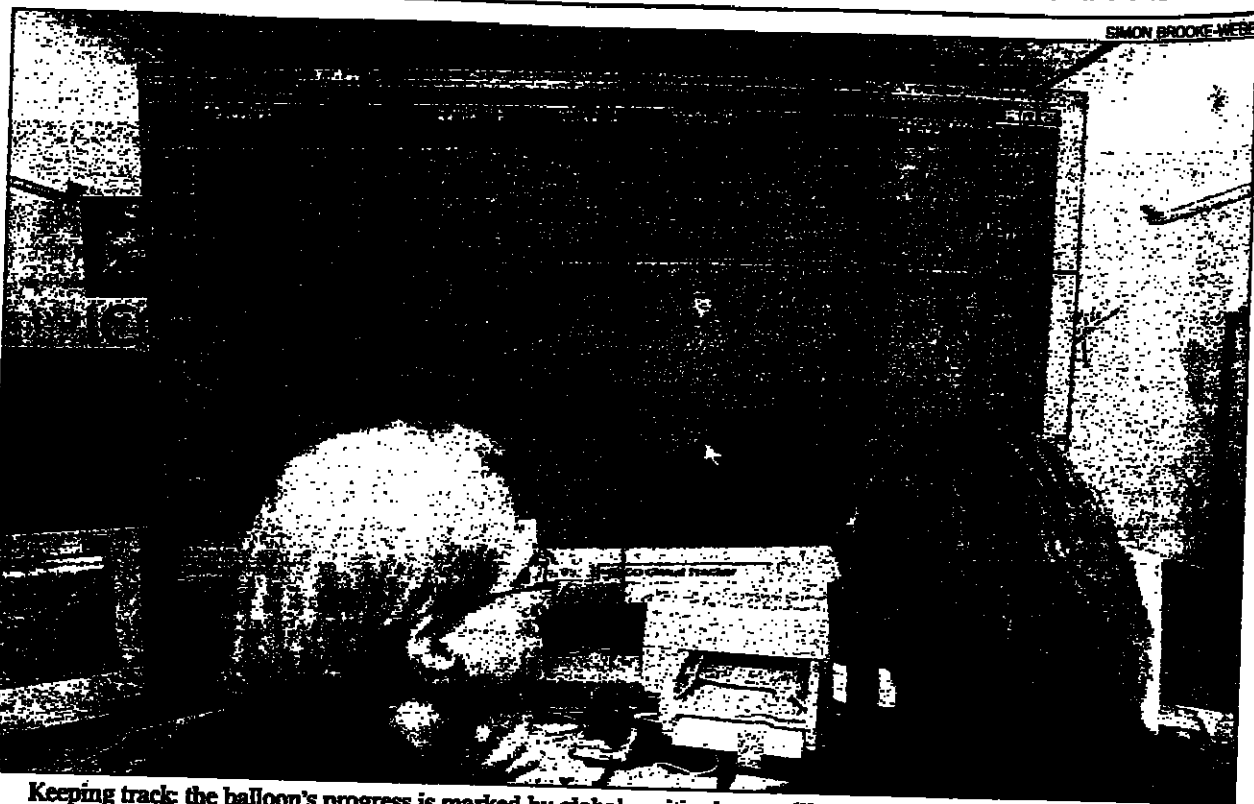
the time and whose last solo adventure saw him plunge into the Pacific in a storm, made the crew scramble for their parachutes.

Branson said in a message via ground control: "I tried to lie down and get some sleep but Steve shouted: 'Get your parachute on, there's a thunderstorm ahead.' We had to climb to try to go over it but that brought us another problem. By climbing, the winds brought us closer to Iraq."

The balloon survived and missed northern Iraq by 50 miles just before midnight on Saturday. Branson then took the helm, guiding the 15-tonne craft for more than six hours with constant advice from expert trackers in London who communicated with him via satellite link.

"I spoke to him afterwards and he was absolutely wiped out and emotional," Mr Kendrick said. "Our crisis was about 2.7 per day, but we are now hoping for an uneventful flight before our next big hurdle, which is the Himalayas."

The Virgin team has already got farther than any of its pre-



Keeping track: the balloon's progress is marked by global positioning satellite at mission control in West London

vious global attempts after three fraught days in the 10ft pressurised capsule. It has completed more than 3,000 miles of the 24,000-mile round trip and is due to land in Oxfordshire in nine days' time.

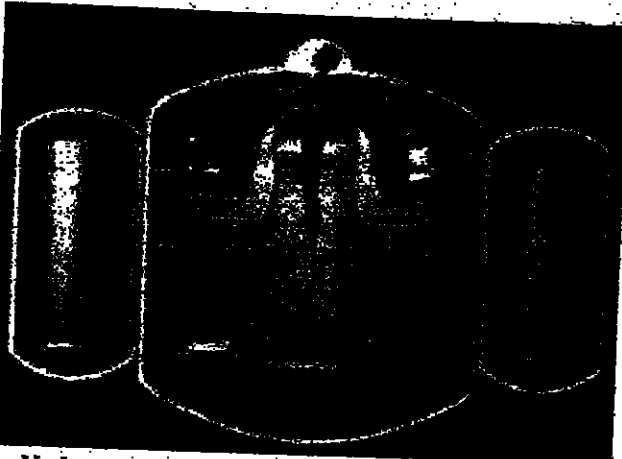
Mr Kendrick said Branson's illness has been caused by the dryness of air in a pressurised capsule flying at altitude. "He lost his voice and we

thought he might have a cold," he said. "If we get anything contagious in that capsule then we're in trouble, but there are no signs of any problem with the other two."

The 48-year-old multimillionaire updated his will just before the balloon took off and wrote letters to his children, Holly, 17, and Sam, 15, to be opened if he fails to return.

NET LINKS

- www.icoglobal.com Richard Branson is keeping an e-mail diary and full details of his flight, including pictures from the capsule.
- www.bretting-orbiter.ch/ Bretting Orbiter 3, Richard Branson's main rival, plans to launch later this month. Website in English and French with message board and updates.
- <http://www.fai.org/> details of rules for balloonists, established by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI)



Under pressure: inside the balloon's 10ft-high capsule

Even high-flyers can be laid low

By DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

EVEN in a sealed, pressurised capsule at 29,000ft, Richard Branson is susceptible to the infections that have swept European cities recently.

Patients have suffered a persistent dry cough, sore throat, laryngitis — with loss of voice, a modest temperature and a feeling of wretchedness. The infections seem to be more persistent than the usual winter cold: patients have tended to feel unwell for up to a fortnight. The effects are not as disabling as flu.

If the cabin of his balloon is pressurised to the extent of one in a aircraft, conditions will be equivalent to living at 5,000-8,000ft. At this height, air in pockets or cavities in the body expands. The increase in the pressure in the cavities in-

creases discomfort caused by any inflammation of their linings. Mr Branson's infection will therefore bother him less than he would at sea level. The cabin's low humidity will also be aggravating.

Few people suffer acute mountain sickness at heights equivalent to the barometric pressure within the cabin. An unlucky climber or balloonist might notice breathlessness, palpitations, tiredness and nausea, and the symptoms of a viral infection could be exacerbated. The effects of acute mountain sickness soon pass.

If Mr Branson is suffering from one of the winter viruses, it is unlikely that antibiotics will work and likely that his companions will catch the infection.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mummy mystery

Police have begun a murder inquiry after a mummified body was found in undergrowth. The badly decomposed body, of a white man in his twenties, was inside a sleeping bag in parkland near Woodbridge, Suffolk. A post-mortem examination showed that the skin was parched and mummified, indicating that the body had been stored in dry and airy conditions before being dumped in Fen Meadow park. Police are checking dental records and missing persons' registers and taking DNA samples to try to identify the body. No cause of death has been established.

Man on rape charges

A part-time disc jockey arrested by police hunting a serial sex attacker is due to appear in court today charged with another 19 offences, including four of rape and eight of threats to kill. Richard Baker, 34, of Bodmin, Cornwall, was charged with indecent assault and threatening to kill a 35-year-old woman when he appeared at Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court, London, on Friday.

Nobel laureate dies

Professor Sir Alan Hodgkin, one of Britain's most distinguished biologists, has died, aged 84. Sir Alan won the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1963 with Professor Andrew Huxley and Sir John Eccles for discovering how nerve cells transmit electrical impulses from the skin to the brain. He was a former President of the Royal Society and a Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. *Obituary, page 19*

Pinochet 'out of cash'

General Augusto Pinochet's wife, Lucia Hiriart, has denied that the former Chilean dictator has Swiss bank accounts. She says his family will have to sell "the few things we have" to pay medical and legal expenses. The family is known to own several houses. A MORI poll has found that 40 per cent of Britons believe the general should be sent to Spain to face charges over crimes committed under his rule.

Christmas warms up

Christmas is expected to be one of the mildest on record. Unseasonably high temperatures are forecast for most of England and Wales; Scotland may have snow only on the hills. The bookmaker William Hill is offering 6-1 on a white Christmas in London and Cardiff, and the same on Christmas Day 1998 being the warmest of the century, beating the 15.6C (60.1F) in Devon in 1920. *Forecast, page 29*

The benefits of Orange soon add up

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100 free park for lost calls automatic calls	✓	✓	✓	✓
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24-hour emergency helpline	✓	✓	✓	✓
3-year phone warranty	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Lockerbie waits in hope for the tragedy to end

"THE actions of good people can overcome evil," said Bert Ammerman, an American visiting Lockerbie for the tenth anniversary of the bombing that killed his brother.

In the days after horrendous night of December 21, 1988, the people of the small town were united in their efforts to help the bereaved. Tonight they will gather again in a red sandstone church to remember the 270 victims of Britain's worst air disaster.

The message is one of thanks and gratitude," said Mr Ammerman, a school principal from River Vale, New Jersey, and one of the leading figures in the American families' group, Terrorism Watch Pan Am 103. "This was a massive tragedy and a cowardly action."

This is the seventh time he has visited the spot where the body of his brother Thomas was found. About 30 people who lost relatives when Flight 103 exploded over the town will attend a short ecumenical service at Dryfesdale Parish Church, followed by a cup of tea in the Town Hall.

Marjory McQueen, one of Lockerbie's two councillors, said, "It won't be a big deal, but we don't want any visitors going back to sit in an empty hotel room by themselves. We want them to know they are welcome."

The Duke of Edinburgh will attend a wreath-laying service at Lockerbie's burial ground, and there will be simultaneous services in London and America. No anniversary of the crash goes unrecorded, but this year the town has braced itself for a deluge of painful reminders. For weeks there have been more visitors than usual clogging up the narrow

Ten years on, Gillian Harris sees a town still working to heal scars of the past

streets. Many of the recent messages in the book of remembrance, in a stone hut on the hillside where the plane's blue and nose cone was found, were written with the tenth anniversary in mind.

The people of Lockerbie are hoping this will be a watershed. Mrs McQueen said: "Once it's over, I think it will be time for Lockerbie to be left alone with its own memories."

At 7pm on the cold night of the bombing, most people were preparing dinner, watching television or wrapping Christmas presents. Three minutes later, a bomb hidden in a Toshiba radio-cassette player exploded in the New York-bound plane 31,000ft overhead. It took four minutes for the broken aircraft to hit the ground, spraying wreckage across the rolling farmland which surrounds Lockerbie. All 259 passengers and crew were killed. A row of houses in Sherwood Crescent was crushed and 11 more died.

A crater, 40ft deep by 150ft long, was created by the rear section of the plane when it landed on the bank beside the A74 trunk road linking Scotland and England. The alarm was raised by Scott Maxwell, an AA patrolman, who heard a strange noise and saw a piece of plane bounce off the

wall and landed on a neighbour's roof. Mr Maxwell thought it must be from a low-flying military aircraft. He tried to call police, discovered that the telephone lines were down and radioed from his van to the AA in Glasgow.

Mrs McQueen was watching *This Is Your Life* when she heard a roar. Opening her back door, she saw an aeroplane wing hitting the ground. "I don't remember the bang. I just remember a crump sound and the entire sky turned orange."

Within minutes, people were out on the streets to see what they could do. Many headed for the doctor's surgery with sandwiches and blankets but there were no wounded. "You were either very much alive or very much dead," said Mrs McQueen.

Police, firemen, search and rescue teams and doctors spent the night sifting through the debris. They attempted to shroud the bodies in tarpaulins. Only the bodies which had fallen on rooftops and in gardens were moved under cover of darkness to avoid unnecessary distress when people opened their curtains.

The following day, 1,000 police officers and 500 military personnel arrived. Makeshift mortuaries were set up at the town hall and the ice rink to receive the dead, some of whom were still strapped in their airline seats. Their luggage, containing Christmas gifts, was spread over an area of 845 square miles. In Lockerbie, all festivities were cancelled. One woman spent days washing and ironing the victims' clothing before sending it home to their families.

The victims were from 21 countries, including 188 Americans and 44 British. Passengers who boarded the flight at Heathrow included 37 students from Syracuse University, New York, four State Department officials, Bert Carlsson, the United Nations commissioner for Namibia, two engaged couples, and a family of four from Surrey.



Lockerbie cemetery's garden of remembrance. A retired policeman said: "The ultimate thing would be to have a trial. People would like proof"

On the ground, a teenager, David Flannigan, survived because he was at a friend's house. His parents and sister Joanne, 10, were killed in their home. The sight of the bewildered boy with a toy watering can, all he could find to remember his dead sister, is Mrs McQueen's most poignant memory of that night.

"He said 'That's the only thing I can find of my sister.' I don't know how it had survived. That just cracked me up."

Ten years on, the continued uncertainty over who planted the bomb angers some of the residents. George Stobbs, 64, a retired police inspector who was on duty the night the plane crashed, said: "I think the ultimate thing would be to have a trial. People would like to have it proved one way or the other."

He remembers seeing a wrought-iron gate that melted "like a candle" before his eyes in the heat. "It affected me for about a year. I had been a policeman for 28 years and had seen death in every way you could think of. It wasn't the fact it was dead bodies lying around, it was the vast number and ages of them. You could not have been human if

you had not been affected."

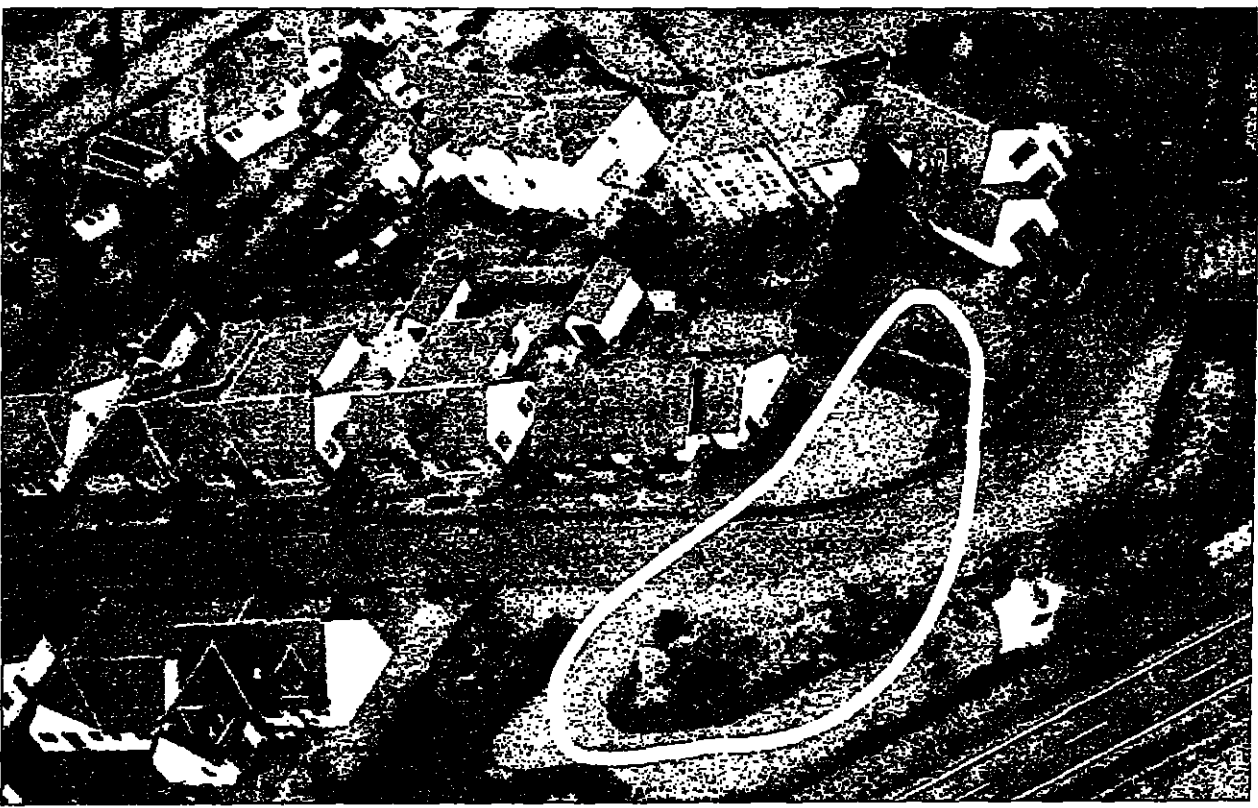
Some people could not believe how unfortunate the town was to be hit when it is a tiny settlement surrounded by miles of open countryside. Others said that they were lucky. Eleven residents died, but it could have been up to 3,000 if the plane had landed on the town centre.

For 364 days of the year, Lockerbie still looks to the future. "Forward — that's our town motto," said Mrs McQueen. "We have had ten years of children being born and new people moving into town. We are making progress all the time."

FLIGHT 103: THE SEARCH FOR JUSTICE

December 21, 1988: Pan Am Flight 103 blown up over Lockerbie; 270 people killed. Nov 14, 1991: United States and Britain accuse two Libyans, Abdul Baset Ali al-Megrahi and Lamin Khalifa Fhimma, of the bombing. Libya denies involvement. Jan 21, 1992: United Nations orders Libya to surrender suspects for trial in Scotland or the United States. April 15, 1992: UN air and arms embargo on Libya. Oct 2, 1993: Britain, US and France tighten sanctions. May 27, 1995: John Major rejects Nelson Mandela's call for trial in neutral country. December 11, 1996: Abdul

Baset Ali al-Megrahi says he is willing to stand trial in a neutral country. Oct 6, 1997: The International Court of Justice in The Hague says it will hear case if suspects are handed over. July 22, 1998: Britain and US agree to hold trial at The Hague under Scots law. December 6: Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, visits Colonel Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, to persuade him to hand the two suspects over before the tenth anniversary of the bombing. Dec 16: Relatives of British victims say that they are hopeful the men will stand trial by the end of January.



After the night of the bombing, these ruined houses and giant crater showed where wreckage landed on Lockerbie. Today, above right, the houses have been rebuilt and a garden covers the site of the crater beside the A74

Braveheart letter will return to Scotland

By Shirley English

A LETTER from William Wallace, penned after his victory over the English at Stirling Bridge in 1297, is to be returned to Scotland for the first time next year. The Latin parchment is thought to be the only surviving relic linked to the Scottish hero.

Until this month, historians believed that it had been destroyed during the Second World War. It was discovered in an archive in Lübeck, Germany, and the new Museum of Scotland has succeeded in negotiating a temporary loan for a special exhibition on Wallace, whose exploits featured in the film *Braveheart*.

The letter was one of two sent to trading allies in Lübeck and Hamburg, declaring that Scotland "has by arms been recovered out of the power of the English" and urging them to reopen trade routes. The document sent to Hamburg was destroyed during Allied bombing. The Lübeck letter was assumed to have suffered the same fate.

It was discovered by a Scottish newspaper earlier this month, just days after the Museum of Scotland opened in Edinburgh with no reference to Wallace in its collection. A museum spokeswoman said: "We are absolutely delighted."

Space mission to the giant potato could save the Earth

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

THE first spacecraft designed to orbit an asteroid was set on course yesterday. If all goes well, the Near (Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous) spacecraft will spend a year studying at close hand the asteroid Eros, a potato-shaped body about 25 miles long and nine miles across.

Eros's gravity is feeble, but strong enough to keep the half-ton satellite in orbit. Near will come within nine miles of the surface, using six instruments to determine the asteroid's chemistry, mineral content, mass and density.

Later it may go even closer, possibly even landing gently on the surface and taking off again. The information gained could one day save the Earth from a catastrophic impact with an asteroid, say scientists from the US space agency Nasa.

"From time to time, these things hit Earth," said Nasa's Carl Pilcher. Most such collisions are small and harmless, but if a big one hits, "all hell breaks loose".

An asteroid only six miles across is thought to have smashed into Earth 65 million years ago and wiped out the dinosaurs. Smaller ones have been linked to regional extinctions. To protect the planet, scientists need to know the density and composition of aster-

oids so they can determine how to shatter or divert them with explosives. "It is prudent for us to learn the properties of these objects if one day we find one with our name on it," Pilcher said.

Joseph Veverka, of Cornell University, the leader of the Near science team, said: "If you are going to do anything about an asteroid, then you have to learn to operate in close proximity."

Yesterday's rocket burn was the first of several needed to nudge Near into a gentle approach to Eros at a relative

speed of only 15ft per second by January 10. A final insertion burn on that day should put it into orbit.

That will complete a journey of a billion and a half miles, which has taken three years and cost almost £70 million. "This is the most critical phase of the mission, the rendezvous phase," said Robert Farquhar, of Johns Hopkins University, the Near mission manager. "We should have a very exciting three weeks coming up. I just hope they aren't too exciting."

Near was launched from

Florida in early 1996. It took a wide swing around the sun, and then made a close "fly-by" of Earth last January to pick up a gravitational boost that carried it on toward the asteroid.

Last June, the craft flew within 753 miles of another asteroid, Mathilde. It took photographs and measurements that determined that Mathilde was a low-density object, probably a loose assembly of rubble rather than a solid slab of rock.

By the time of the rendezvous, the spacecraft will be about 240 million miles from Earth and 161 million miles from the Sun. Eros is the second-largest asteroid which lies in an orbit which occasionally brings it close to Earth.

The closest it came was 14 million miles in January 1975. It was first identified a century ago, in August 1898, by Gustav Witt, the director of the Urania Observatory in Berlin.

Conditions on Eros are hardly exotic. There is no air, and no evidence of water. Daytime temperatures are sultry enough, at 100C, but at night it plunges to -150C.

Gravity is so weak that an athletic jump would be almost enough to put you into orbit. The escape velocity is a mere 22mph, compared with 7,000mph for the Earth.

Two million more robins bob in for Christmas

By A Correspondent

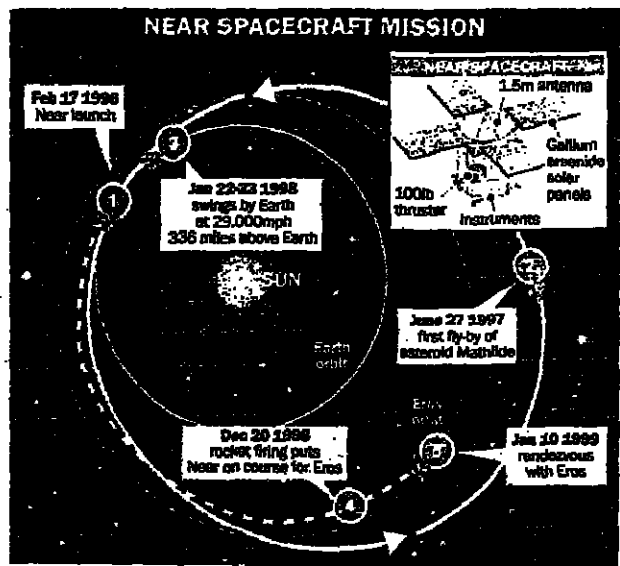
ROBINS are as popular as ever on Christmas cards this year, and appearing in ever greater numbers across the countryside.

There was a small dip in the population of the short-lived birds last year, but the British Trust for Ornithology believes that the number of adult robins has increased by 38 per cent — 1.3 million pairs — over the past 12 months.

Jeremy Greenwood, the trust's director, said: "It is very good to find that Britain's national bird, the robin, is one of the winners this year."

The birds' population growth continues a generally healthy trend, but populations of some related species — such as the song thrush — are in serious decline, largely as a result of modern agricultural practices. Numbers of blue tits and chaffinches were also found to be falling.

The adult robin population was thought to have remained in the vicinity of 3.5 million pairs over the decade prior to this year's boom. The trust's new estimate was based on the number of robins caught and released in 79 places around the country, and the trust is confident that the sample counts give an accurate picture of the national trend.



NOTICE OF VARIATION OF INTEREST RATES

With effect from 4th January 1999, for both new and existing customers, the following rates will decrease to:

- Mortgage Rate 7.70% per annum
- 100% Mortgage Rate 8.20% per annum
- Flexible Choice Mortgage Rate 6.95% per annum
- Royal Premier Mortgage Rate 6.95% per annum

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CLINTON: THE SHOCK WAVES



The cartoonist Peterson pokes fun at Congress's impeachment process in *The Sun of Vancouver*

Capitol is haunted by fear of hunt for adulterers

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

THE resignation of Bob Livingston, the incoming Speaker, over a string of extramarital affairs and the spectre of a slew of further revelations about the infidelities of Congressmen has brought the chill of "sexual McCarthyism" to the capital.



It was Hillary's idea

about Larry Flynt, the pornographer who uncovered Mr Livingston's unfaithfulness, promises to expose up to a dozen more of them as part of what he describes as a campaign against "hypocrisy".

The disclosure dismayed a political body drained by recent events: many could only liken to a dream or novel. Representatives had sat down to hear Mr Livingston, a widely respected man, make his closing remarks in the impeachment debate only to be hit by a completely unexpected resignation speech.

With grown men, including Tom DeLay, the Republican whip, apparently struggling to fight back tears, they then had to turn their attention to the most important votes they will ever cast. Tempers frayed as Democrats lost an attempt to censure the President rather than impeach him and the massed ranks of the party staged a symbolic walkout.

When two articles of impeachment were passed and Mr Clinton entered history as only the second President to face a trial in the Senate, the Democrats spat furious condemnations of Republicans



Bob Livingston, briefly the Republican Speaker-elect, gets a hug from a colleague on Capitol Hill. His mantle falls to Dennis Hastert, right



French critic scorns 'justice parody'

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE impeachment vote made headlines around the world yesterday, though most governments were silent on the political turmoil in the United States, saying it was an internal matter for America.

President Estrada of the Philippines, who has faced allegations of womanising in the past, declined to respond to questions about it, and Tony Blair said it would not be right for him to comment.

But the Prime Minister said he had "nothing but contempt" for suggestions that the US-British bombing raid on Iraq was timed to divert attention away from the impeachment.

"I find it utterly grotesque and offensive, not just to President Clinton, but to me, that anyone could suggest we would put British or American servicemen or women into action because of any internal matter in the United States of America," he said.

REACTION

In France, Jack Lang, the president of the Foreign Affairs Commission in the National Assembly, said Mr Clinton had been "the victim of a witch-hunt from another era".

The House of Representatives has "just offered the world a festival of hypocrisy", he said, adding that the proceedings had been a "parody of justice" and a "sectarian fundamentalism" that risked destabilising a great democracy.

The South Korean state news agency, Yonhap, said it was a "very unhappy day". It urged Mr Clinton to apologise for his "lies".

"It's time to show Bill the door and say hello to Gore," said an editorial in the *News of the World*. The *Observer* said impeachment was "a tragedy for the US and the world", but sympathised with Democrats who believed that the vote was "an attempted constitutional coup d'état by the Republicans".

In Germany the *Berliner Morgenpost* called the impeachment vote "horrible theatre". The *Lewinsky* affair had "poisoned the political climate of the United States" and damaged the country's standing abroad.

VOTE FAILS TO UNDERMINE PRESIDENT'S POPULARITY

Washington: The majority of Americans support President Clinton despite his impeachment, polls published yesterday showed.

Popularity: a survey conducted by the NBC television network on Saturday as the House of Representatives voted to impeach Mr Clinton showed 72 per cent of Americans approve his performance as President. That was a marked increase from a similar NBC poll on Tuesday, which put his approval rating at 68 per cent, already an unusually high measure of support for a US President.

Remain in office: asked whether President Clinton should remain in office, 62 per cent of those polled answered yes — a sharp increase from the 51 per cent who responded affirmatively to the same question in the survey last Tuesday.

Resign: the number who said Mr Clinton should resign dropped to 34 per cent, compared to 44 per cent last Tuesday. The survey was of 510 adults and had a margin of error of 4.5 per cent.

Separately, a poll conducted jointly by The New York Times and the CBS television network showed the impeachment vote had little or no impact on the strong public support for Mr Clinton. That survey, conducted after the impeachment vote, showed 66 per cent of Americans were opposed to Mr Clinton resigning, while 31 per cent thought his resignation would be better for the country. (AFP)

form" of those who held the fate of President Clinton in their hands.

"People always lie about sex — to get sex, during sex, after sex, about sex. I totally disagree that perjury is perjury. Lying about your private life, even under oath, is totally different." But his actions have provoked fury and despair among both parties in Congress.

While Republicans called for Mr Clinton to resign as Mr Livingston had done. Demo-

crats, some of whom had accused Republicans of a sexual witchhunt in their treatment of Mr Clinton, argued that the Speaker-elect had been wrong to cave in.

Henry Hyde, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, whose own decades-old affair was exposed earlier this year, said: "Something is going on repeatedly that has to be stopped and that is a confusion between private acts of infidelity and public acts."

Many echoed his view. *Salon*, the Internet magazine

ought to be between a person and his family and God, and crimes, which are the concern of the state and of society as a whole."

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Leading article and letters, page 17

Indecent exposure likely in the Congress v Larry Flynt

MORALS

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN NEW YORK

FOUR days ago President Clinton's staunchest supporter outside Washington was Bayra Streissand. Now it is a pornographer.

Larry Flynt, the wheelchair-bound publisher of *Hustler* magazine, thrust himself into America's constitutional crisis last month with an offer of \$1 million (£95,000) for stories of affairs in high places. As his findings leak out and his methods are condemned, the nation's "moral high ground" is beginning to look small indeed.

His first victim, Bob Livingston, can expect further humiliation when the *Hustler* exposure is published, Mr Flynt said at the weekend. He also threatened to disclose the secret life of a hitherto untarnished Republican on the House Judiciary Committee on whom "we have really got the goods".

There is more, apparently. The man who once wore stars-and-stripes underpants before a US judge has said that he has solid evidence to "out" ten more high-ranking Republicans as adulterers. Mr Flynt took to the airwaves on Saturday to crow about his investigation or, rather, to gurggle, for he has an otherworldly, frog-like voice softened by years of medication for manic depression and the pain of being struck in the spine by a would-be killer's bullet in 1978. While denying responsibility for Mr Livingston's fall, he



The Republican Party's nemesis, Larry Flynt, centre, publisher of *Hustler* magazine

told Cable News Network: "I'm happy if my efforts had anything to do with it."

"I think right-wing bullies like him are more of a threat to our unique form of democracy than anything else."

Speaking from his elliptical office building in West Hollywood, where his top-floor suite is furnished like a 19th-century Italian brothel, Mr Flynt said his crusade was against hypocrisy, not individuals. When crisis, not individuals, he said that the Lewinsky affair "still boils down to a simple issue of sex, which should be a private matter", his interviewer shot back that the million-dollar offer therefore was unwarranted. "The publisher

replied: "Desperate times deserve desperate action." Raised in Kentucky and apprenticed in the moonshine business, Mr Flynt switched to hard-core pornography after Hugh Hefner and *Playboy* demonstrated how lucrative the soft-core variety could be.

For three decades he has appalled feminists and, often, his own readers with images judged to stretch free-speech laws to the limit.

One *Hustler* cover, of a starlet being fed into a meat-grinder, brought condemnation even from others in the porn business, and a long-running libel battle with Jerry Falwell, the evangelist and Moral Ma-

jority leader, took him to the Supreme Court. His victory there was the climax of *The People vs Larry Flynt*.

Mr Flynt lives in a Bel Air mansion festooned with lewd statuary and commutes to the office in a red Rolls Royce with his gold-plated wheelchair in the boot.

His investigation into Republicans' sex lives has cost \$500,000 so far, he said, and has used the services of two top investigative reporters and a team of former FBI workers.

After Mr Livingston's resignation-announcement on Friday, his nemesis said: "Several more are going to bite the dust before this is over."

Mountain of pizza means big trouble

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

WAGS in the White House have dubbed their predicament the "impizzament crisis". In Washington the depth of a political crisis is measured by what is known as the Pizza Index. The bigger the problem, the longer people stay late at work, and the more pizza is delivered.

In the days before the impeachment debate President Clinton's team ate themselves to a new record. Even in times of relative calm Mr Clinton and his aides display a remarkable capacity for pizza. In a normal three-day period the White House orders about \$550 (£340) of pizza from Dom-

WHITE HOUSE

ino's Pizzas, a chain with a faintly astonishing 60 branches in Washington. The previous record was set in the three days after the Monica Lewinsky story broke in January when those burning the midnight oil shovelled away \$2,600 of the stuff. But in the three days before last Friday's debate the bill topped \$3,100, with demand for "extra cheese" up 32 per cent.

The origins of the present sorry mess can be traced to the night of November 17, 1995, when Mr Clinton took delivery of a pizza in the Oval Office. The young intern who presented him with the pizza and a winning smile was one Monica Lewinsky.

Mortgages

NOTICE OF INTEREST RATE VARIATION

The following interest rates for mortgages provided by Banking Direct, a Division of Bank of Scotland, will apply with effect from 4th January 1999 for both new and existing borrowers.

Banking Direct Mortgage Rate (Variable) 7.69% per annum.

Centrebank Mortgage Rate (Variable) 7.69% per annum.

Stabilised Charging Rate 7.99% per annum.

Adaptable Mortgage Plan Charging Rate 7.85% per annum.

Banking Direct Mortgage Rate Plus (Variable) 8.19% per annum.

Centrebank Mortgage Rate Plus (Variable) 8.19% per annum.

Home Loan Rate 7.69% per annum.

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Bonn frets over leadership in Europe as Clinton is pilloried

Germans, like other Europeans, have been stunned at the speed with which Washington has hurried towards the impeachment of President Clinton. The new Social Democratic-Green Government had been poised to renegotiate its relationship with the United States to correct some of the imbalances that occurred during the Kohl Administration. Now Europe has to deal with, at best, a lame-duck presidency. Suddenly all the old anxieties have returned. Although the Green Party remains deeply sceptical about US power, the Government needs strong American leader-

INSIDE GERMANY



BY ROGER BOYES

ship more than ever before. The same goes for France: weak American presidencies can be exploited, but ultimately they weaken the authority

of European governments. The bombing of Iraq has, despite public declarations to the contrary, united continental European public opinion against America. Even the British are less than convinced. Christmas is a bad time to bomb, and the attacks on Iraq are being read as a symptom of weak rather than strong US leadership. But it is Kosovo, rather than Iraq, which will be the first test of transatlantic confidence. A Serbian spring offensive is expected and President Milosevic of Yugoslavia will be encouraged to take NATO to the brink of war. The Germans will occupy the presi-

dency of the European Union from January 1 and will be wrapped up with the intractable problems of financial and agricultural reform, handicapped by the Greens, who are reluctant to take on new Balkan commitments and unable to drum up or present a unified European position. They will wait, as before, for an American lead on Kosovo. Yet a President so fatally debilitated would be dangerously exposed if he were to embark on a Balkan offensive so soon after the Iraqi strikes: not so much *Wag the Dog* as *Dr Strangelove*. It does not take much to flush German worries to the

surface. The new year will bring a Russian succession crisis at a time when Germany is intimately involved with the Russian economy. Ruhrgas, Germany's chief energy distributor, has just bought into the giant Russian gas producer, Gazprom, for about £220 million which will go towards easing the Russian deficit. Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor, has made a point of shifting the focus of German-Russian relations away from President Yeltsin but there is no doubt the panic that will radiate from Russia into Europe when Mr Yeltsin goes. Crises in Russia and Kos-

ovo, Europe in a tangle about its institutional future, the introduction of the euro and faltering economies will all come to the fore. Add to this an inward-looking America, bewildered by its own domestic problems, and the final year of this century will be one of political despondency. The German political class has undergone a remarkable transformation since the Gulf War of 1991 — two worlds divide Desert Storm from Desert Fox. Then, German deputies came to parliament carrying white candles or wearing armbands to mourn dead Iraqis.

Only when President Saddam Hussein threatened Israel, and when it emerged that German firms had helped to build his poison gas plants, did the mood swing. The Greens modified their pacifism and, thanks to Saddam, moved closer to becoming a party of government. Today the Greens are biting their lips; there is little public protest against the attacks on Iraq but a sense of unease. The Greens changed their spots because Saddam was identified with Hitler, but they are having problems repressing their natural anti-Americanism. The German Government wants an anti-

nuclear component built into the new Nato strategy document being prepared for April and it wants United Nations approval for every armed action abroad. Both these policy proposals are seen as restraints on American power. Before President Clinton steamed into such troubled waters, the Red-Green Government had other plans to redress the transatlantic balance. Helmut Kohl was seen as Bill Clinton's poodle. Herr Schröder regarded himself more as a warrior, stubborn, but ready to fight if necessary. Now the master has swallowed his whistle and Europeans are starting to fret.

Beijing sends top rebel into US exile

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

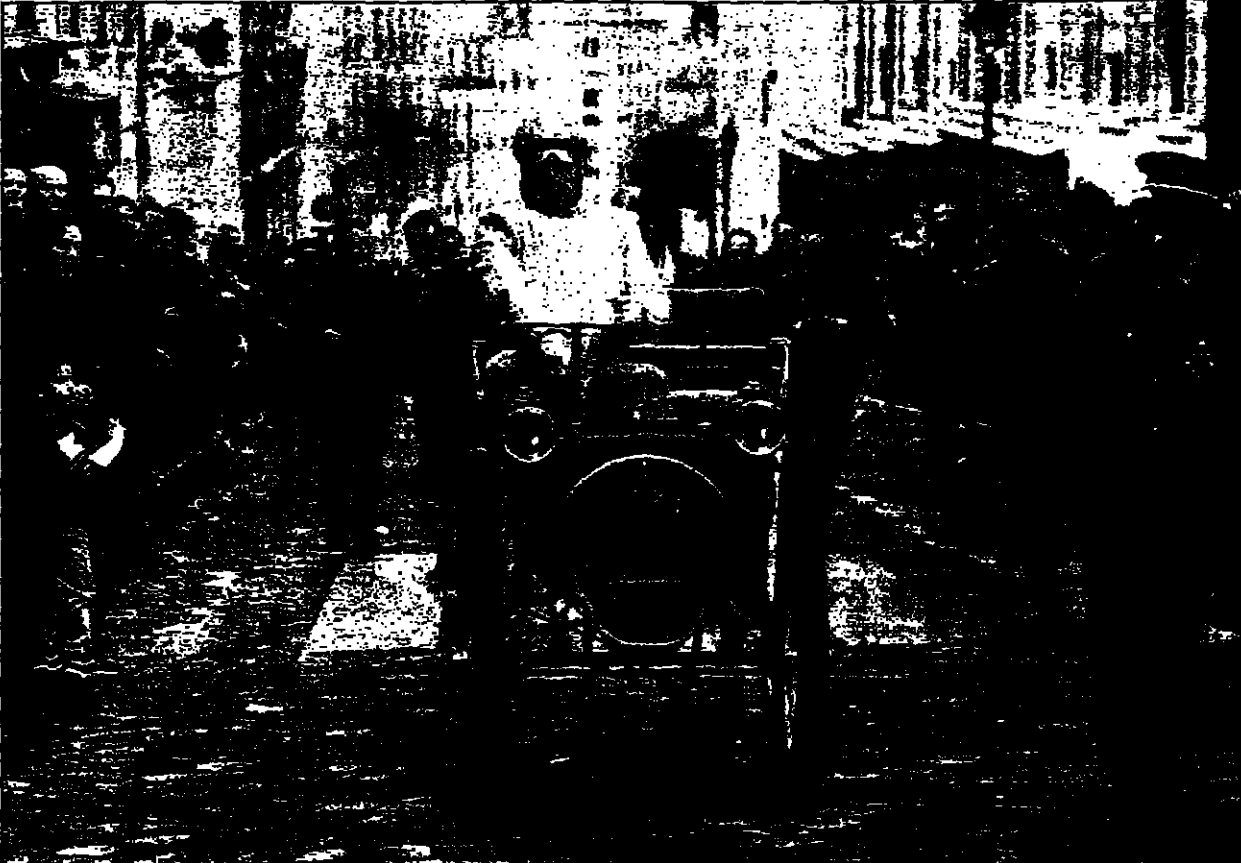
IN THE midst of a harsh new political crackdown, Beijing will today put on trial for "subversion" the best-known human rights dissident still active inside China, just 24 hours after an ailing labour reformer was released on "medical parole" and flown to the United States. Xu Wenli, 55, a veteran dissident who last summer joined others in trying to form the Democratic Party to challenge the Communist Party's monopoly on power, will be tried amid heavy security in Beijing on the day after the departure of Liu Nianchun, 50, the rights activist. Mr Liu, a novelist and former factory worker, is the third dissident to be freed on medical parole — his wife says



Liu Nianchun, left, exiled dissident, with Xu Wenli

he has intestinal problems and high blood pressure — and forced into exile since November last year when Wei Jingsheng, the veteran activist, was released to be followed by Wang Dan, the Tiananmen Square student leader, earlier this year. Their departures to

the United States relieved the Chinese leadership of persistent irritants and their involuntary exile is not viewed by analysts here as a rights concession on Beijing's part. Instead, such freed dissidents have been used in the past as bargaining chips to win concessions for Beijing from Western countries. Some dissidents here said that Mr Liu's release yesterday — he was driven straight to the airport from prison — was probably intended as a diversion to the other prosecutions currently taking place. A veteran of the 1978-79 democracy wall movement, Mr Xu has spent 12 years in prison for calling for democracy. Before his arrest, Mr Xu set out his ideas about the Democratic Party he was trying to form. Mr Xu, a slightly-built grey-haired man with mild manners, does not look the part of a warrior for democracy, willing to confront the might of China's security apparatus. Yet he spent 11 years in solitary confinement for "illegally organising a clique to overthrow the Government" — effectively, calling for political rights.



Renault's first model, the Voiturette, climbs Rue Lepic in Montmartre at the weekend, marking the centenary of Louis Renault's drive along the same Paris street at the wheel of his first car. He ended his 1898 trip with 12 orders

HSBC Midland Bank Interest Rates

Advice of interest rate changes for personal customers from 22 December 1998

Rates for Savers

High Interest Savings Account 60 days notice (Annual interest option)	Old Rate		New Rate from 22 Dec 98	
	Gross	AER	Gross	AER
£100,000 +	6.35%	5.85%	5.85%	5.85%
£50,000 +	6.05%	5.55%	5.55%	5.55%
£10,000 +	5.95%	5.45%	5.45%	5.45%
Up to £10,000	5.75%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%

Midland Instant Access Savings (Annual interest option)	Old Rate		New Rate from 22 Dec 98	
	Gross	AER	Gross	AER
£50,000 +	5.50%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
£25,000 +	4.65%	4.15%	4.15%	4.15%
£10,000 +	4.20%	3.70%	3.70%	3.70%
Up to £10,000	4.00%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%

Deposit Account 7 days notice (No longer sold)	Old Rate		New Rate from 22 Dec 98	
	Gross	AER	Gross	AER
£50,000 +	5.44%	5.00%	4.99%	5.00%
£25,000 +	4.61%	4.15%	4.12%	4.15%
£10,000 +	4.16%	3.70%	3.67%	3.70%
Up to £10,000	3.97%	3.50%	3.48%	3.50%

Tessa and follow-up Tessa (Annual Tax Free Interest)	Old Rate		New Rate from 22 Dec 98	
	Tax free	AER/Tax free	Tax free	AER/Tax free
	6.80%	6.80%	6.80%	6.80%

Bank Accounts

Student Bank Account	Old Rate		New Rate from 22 Dec 98	
	Gross	AER	Gross	AER
	1.49%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%

16 - 19 Year Old Account	Old Rate		New Rate from 22 Dec 98	
	Gross	AER	Gross	AER
	1.74%	1.25%	1.25%	1.25%

Livacash	Old Rate		New Rate from 22 Dec 98	
	Gross	AER	Gross	AER
	3.93%	3.50%	3.45%	3.50%

Meridian Bank Account	Old Rate		New Rate from 22 Dec 98	
	Gross	AER	Gross	AER
£50,000 +	3.45%	3.25%	3.21%	3.25%
£10,000 +	2.96%	2.50%	2.48%	2.50%
£2,000 +	1.49%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%
Up to £2,000	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%

Secured Borrowing

HomeOwner Reserve	Old Rate		New Rate from 22 Dec 98	
	APR	Annual Rate	APR	Annual Rate
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Gross: The rate before the deduction of tax, applicable to savings.
AER (Annual Equivalent Rate): A national rate which illustrates what the gross rate would be if interest was paid and compounded each year.
Tax free: Tax free means that interest is not subject to income tax.
All rates are correct as at 22 December 1998 but may vary in the future.

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Peace monitors in Kosovo fear for safety after attack

FROM TOM WALKER IN PRISTINA

THE senior international official in Kosovo, William Walker, has said that he fears for his safety and that of his 2,000 monitors after his bodyguards were attacked by a drunken Serb policeman. However, the Yugoslavs are adamant that the ambassador cannot have an armed bodyguard. "They tell me that I can take armed police with me," he said. "After today's event, I am not very confident that would increase my security." The drunken policeman was driven away by colleagues, his face covered by a hood. The OSCE has faced bitter criticism in the Serb press that it is favouring the Albanians in the Kosovo conflict. After six Serb youths were shot dead by gunmen, presumed to have been Albanians, in a bar in Pec last Monday, a Serb deputy mayor was abducted and killed in Kosovo Polje, just outside Pristina, on Friday. Mr Walker has condemned the incidents, but has questioned the hasty arrests of several Albanians in the Pec area, who have already been labelled by the state press as the perpetrators of the bar massacre. "I guess I'm getting used to a different vocabulary here," Mr Walker said.

Later Mr Walker held talks with Yugoslav government officials, whom he said were "essentially embarrassed at how badly their assurances were undermined." However, the Yugoslavs are adamant that the ambassador cannot have an armed bodyguard. "They tell me that I can take armed police with me," he said. "After today's event, I am not very confident that would increase my security." The drunken policeman was driven away by colleagues, his face covered by a hood. The OSCE has faced bitter criticism in the Serb press that it is favouring the Albanians in the Kosovo conflict. After six Serb youths were shot dead by gunmen, presumed to have been Albanians, in a bar in Pec last Monday, a Serb deputy mayor was abducted and killed in Kosovo Polje, just outside Pristina, on Friday. Mr Walker has condemned the incidents, but has questioned the hasty arrests of several Albanians in the Pec area, who have already been labelled by the state press as the perpetrators of the bar massacre. "I guess I'm getting used to a different vocabulary here," Mr Walker said.

In the southern town of Prizren, British monitors are watching 16 major mosques in an effort to avoid any clashes between police and worshippers during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Over the weekend, the same monitors helped to return the bodies of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrillas, killed on the Albanian border last week, to their families. Protection call: Serbs in Kosovo Polje said yesterday that they would demand the return of security forces that were withdrawn under the threat of Nato airstrikes in October to protect them from attacks by ethnic Albanians. Several hundred Serbs occupied a cultural centre in the town, which has a 90 per cent Albanian majority, to call for protection from Belgrade after the murder of the deputy mayor, which they blame on ethnic Albanian guerrillas. "We'll demand the return of the police and the undertaking of all possible actions to ensure our safety, notwithstanding the international community's views," the Tanjug state news agency quoted the town's mayor as telling the group of demonstrators. (Reuters)

DNA clue to Calvi 'murder'

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

PATHOLOGISTS examining the exhumed body of Roberto Calvi, the Italian banker, have found previously undetected signs of bruises on his wrists and two separate genetic DNA imprints on his underwear, his son Carlo said yesterday. The Italian experts, who carried out the tests to attempt to determine if "God's banker" had been murdered or committed suicide before being found hanged from Blackfriars Bridge in London in 1982, did not confirm or deny the information, which Carlo claimed heightened the suspicion that his father was assassinated. The banker's body was taken under police escort on Saturday and buried at the Calvi family chapel in the northern town of Treviso. It had been recovered from another vault in the village of Drezzo by authorities on Wednesday. The outcome of the exhumation, ordered after Mafia informers indicated Calvi was killed because he knew too much about the mob's money-laundering, is not expected for three months.

Fighting faulty gene of dementia

BY IAN MURRAY MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

CAROL JENNINGS knows she has a 50 per cent chance of developing Alzheimer's disease before she is 60. She comes from one of the 20 or so families with a faulty gene that is now known to be linked to the illness. Her father died of Alzheimer's. So did four of his nine brothers and sisters. All five of them were 55, and in 1955 this sad fact prompted Mrs Jennings to write to St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, asking if there might be a gene that was to blame. In 1991 researchers there discovered that members of her family with the disease all had the same genetic fault on chromosome 21. This fault leads to the creation of high levels of the protein that forms the plaques and nerve cell tangles that occur in Alzheimer's. The discovery that she might have inherited the faulty gene posed a problem for Mrs Jennings. She could take a test, but that would mean having to tell her children that they might have it as well. She was worried that the information might make it impossible for them to obtain a

mortgage or insurance policy. She decided not to find out but to go for regular testing to monitor for signs of the disease. Having watched her father deteriorate for years, she knows what will happen to her if she has inherited his gene. Her family's faulty gene is responsible for only about 1 per cent of Alzheimer's cases, but it causes the same kind of

destructive excess protein build-up that occurs in all patients. Researchers are looking for other common factors that might help to identify those in danger of developing the disease. They could then take preventive measures by changing their lifestyle, or drugs might be designed to stop the protein build-up. At best, the drugs currently available can delay the effects of the disease. They do not work on everyone and cost about £10,000 a year. Many health authorities refuse to pay such money for a treatment which has no apparent long-term benefit. There is no cure because nerve cells are destroyed by the disease. There is no way of replacing or repairing them. Alzheimer's research is poorly funded. Only £10 is spent on investigating the illness per patient compared with £15,000 for every AIDS sufferer. It is in everyone's interest to do something to redress the balance, which is why the Alzheimer's Research Trust is one of the three charities in The Times Christmas Appeal.

Alzheimer's Research Trust Appeal

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To make an instant credit-card donation, phone 0800 444 810 (24-hour freephone), or send this coupon with your donation to: Alzheimer's Research Trust, Livanos House, Granthams Road, Cambridge CB2 8LQ. Tel 01223 940888 for inquiries. Registered charity no 1013880. PLEASE DO NOT SEND DONATIONS TO THE TIMES.

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Wall of the roof of Calvi

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Far Left: Blue velvet embroidered dress, from a selection starting at £130. Blue choker, £165
 Left: Green embroidered jacket from a selection starting at £200. Lilac top from a selection starting from £80. Orange skirt from a selection starting at £165. Floral drop necklace, £96
 Above: Lilac dress with velvet bodice from a selection starting at £130
 Right: Cream floral dress from a selection starting from £150. Neck ring with pendant, £105
 Tracy Felt clothes available from Liberty (0171-734 1234), Browns (0171-491 7833) and Tokio (0171-823 7310). All Jewellery by Erickson Beamon (0171-259 0202)
 Photographer: RYAN SULLIVAN
 Stylist: Deborah Brett
 Hair and make-up: Dirk Neuhofner at Michaeljohn Management
 Model: Faye at Storm
 Shot at Gastros (0171-627 0222).



GIVENCHY

When you cannot be too glamorous

MORE evidence that shop openings are now the social equivalent of being received at court came when Chanel celebrated its new shop in Sloane Street with a modest party for 600 (and that, the PR said, was after the guest list had been ruthlessly pruned).

Meg Matthews and Fran Cutler, her business partner, proved that their company really does exist and isn't merely a front for long champagne lunches and endless shopping trips, by organising the proceedings. This seemed to consist mainly of Fran periodically instructing the club DJ to turn up the volume — which had been sending the more mature Middle Eastern guests scuttling up to the top floor — but did at least ensure that no one in the vicinity was unaware that a bona fide fashion happening was under way.

What the party showed was that while there is usually a fear at many events of overdressing, you cannot be too glamorous when celebrating the dawn of a designer boutique. Feathered head-dresses, floor-length Dolce & Gabbana, chiffon and sparkly Chanel cocktail dresses were all on display.

If nothing else, fashion parties around this time of year are useful for crystallising whatever extremes are going on to a less or greater degree throughout the country.

■ WHILE the ladies who shop combed their wardrobes for silk and sequins at Chanel, the crowd who checked out the cluster of Dutch designers being launched at a bar in the hip Hoxton Square area went into underdrive. Holland, as most fashionistas now know, is the new Belgium (ie, desperately intellectual in its fashion approach: conjure up jackets with 27 sleeves and you're getting there).

Viktor and Rolf, the charmingly serious duo from Arnhem, who took to the Paris couture their brand of atomic chic (all the clothes were designed to fit over huge neck pillows that sat on the models' shoulders and gave them what the designers described as "interesting deformities") are their patron saints and there is talk that some of the designers on show at the East London venue will do very well.

The dress code was reassuring: lots of baggy trousers, curvy cross-dressing and more expanses of pierced surfaces than one might find in the sieve department of Ikea. If this is as anarchic as things get this Christmas, I think we'll all be getting off lightly.

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keeps Feith in fashion



Cream dress with black fringing from a selection from £130; red bag with beaded fringe, £145; black glove to order; black choker, £135 all from Erickson Beamon; crocheted beaded shawl, £45, from Fenwick (0171-629 9161)

Made it in Manhattan: "I guess it proves that you don't have to be part of the fashion system any more to succeed," says designer Tracy Feith, a big hit with Hollywood starlets

There are times during a fashion show when even the most ardent observer must wonder if there are enough women in the world to wear all the clothes that bounce, waft and prowl their way down a catwalk.

When you take that thought a step further and acknowledge that the versions blurring nicely in front of you are merely prototypes for hundreds more facsimiles, it all becomes, as Tracy Feith says, "just real scary — and the answer is no, there probably aren't enough women".

This is heretical thinking for a designer, and a New York-based one at that. But if American fashion prides itself on its sophisticated urban energy, its no-colour and, please, no-frills aesthetic, there is nevertheless a little patchworked corner of it that remains pretty, feminine and resolutely light-hearted. And it is doing very nicely, thank you, which perhaps suggests that there is a beleaguered section of tough, angst-looking American females yearning to climb out of their pleated Marc Jacobs librarian grey skirts and pop on a little silk dress that makes them look like Rita Hayworth.

Two years ago, hardly anyone had heard of Tracy Feith (pronounced Fythe). Now he sells in London, Japan, Israel and Italy, and buyers for America's big department stores are used to prostrating themselves before him in the vain hope that he might, one day, consider selling to them. He probably won't — except to Nieman Marcus because it

He hates the New York scene, yet it loves him. Tracy Feith, former surfer and factory worker, aspires to Ralph Lauren's crown

is a home-grown Dallas chain and he will always be a good Texan boy at heart. Feith, 32, doesn't like department stores. He doesn't like the fashion scene in New York either, which he describes as "horrible and disgusting".

Nor is he wild about fashion shows, so he won't be doing any more of those, thank you. "I did them once, when I first came to New York in the mid-Eighties," he says in a courteous, all-the-time-in-the-world-for-you-ma'am Southern drawl. "And you know what? They were horrible, too." So horrible, they had him drinking coffee.

Before New York, no coffee. Sure? They had coffee in Sherman, Texas, the small blue-collar town in which he grew up? "Yes, but I never saw the point of it," he says. "Then I had to stay up all night for these shows."

It is a long stretch, by any criteria, from Sherman (famous landmarks: the baby-powder factory and Oscar Meyer's hot-dog plant), where he dropped out of school at 18, to (newly chic and very lively) Mulberry Street in Manhattan, where he has just opened a double-fronted store that sells vaguely hippy-style clothes and homeware to

vaguely bohemian New Yorkers. Feith did not set out to be a fashion designer. He spent his late teens working in factories, riding motorcycles and fiddling with guns. ("Everyone has them there.")

The scenario could easily have been a replay of *Easy Rider*, except that Feith, with his faintly dandyish pride in his clothes and genteel manners, could never look as mean as

sumably because when you're sitting around all day waiting for the perfect wave, time becomes a bit meaningless. Somewhere along the line, the realisation that his customised surfing clothes were starting to attract attention and the knowledge that he wasn't entirely fulfilling his potential, propelled him back to Texas — this time to Dallas where he enrolled in art school. Even then, fashion still had not en-

"I didn't have one," Feith recalls. "As a matter of fact, I didn't have a sewing machine." Fortunately a friend in the guard at the factory (another one) in which he worked to pay his way through art school — let him use its machines at night to run up ten pieces, all for men, which the boutique snapped up.

And then in one of those strange quirks of destiny, women started buying them. So avidly that Feith decided to head for New York. Feith says: "It's unfortunate but in America, if you do fashion, you're just not taken as seriously if you do it any place other than New York." His father, who had never been there, suggested that they drive up together. Feith charmed a few senior buyers into looking at his collection and, within 12 months, was taking his runway bows as if to the manor born.

That's when things got horrible. "It was stressful," Feith says, "the people were vile. I hated that whole cycle, and besides, it seems really fetishistic to make clothes that very few people can afford or have the occasions to wear. To me, the greatest kick is just seeing someone wearing one of my designs in the street." He dropped out, took acting classes and found himself in



Dennis Hopper. The factories in which he worked were producing clothes and not cigarets or bullets. "Think of a really schlocky department store in England. Well, I was working on dresses for the equivalent of a schlocky store, and it was great. I learnt how to sew."

Then he went to California and became a surfer by day and a conveyor-belt operator by night. The history gets a bit disjointed at this period, pre-

croached on his consciousness, except that one course option was entitled Experimental Clothing which "sounded kinda fun".

What ensued — "esoteric pieces for men that didn't really look like what they were meant to be" — suggests that for a while Feith was the Deep South's answer to Martin Margiela. At any rate, he showed sufficient talent for the owner of a chic new boutique in Dallas to ask to see his collection.

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'Why I love now'

ANYA HINDMARCH
HANDBAG DESIGNER

Describe your personal style? I like beautifully made clothes that work. I am not very good with clothes that are too now, or that wear me rather than me wearing them.

What period do you love? I love now. There is so much you can do with stretch fabrics, easy care, embroidery techniques, washable leather. People don't want products they have to treat like children.

What accessory/piece of clothing can you not live without? My AH leather journal.

What are your pet hates? Must-have now items that don't last. I also hate expensive things that are badly made.

What do you think of the current fashion trends? It's OK to wear what you like, what you feel good in.

What is the most expensive/haunting item you have bought? The most expensive thing I

buy is Jil Sander. I don't buy lots and lots of clothes, so I see Jil Sander clothes as an investment. They make me feel half a stone thinner.

What is your favourite shop? I love Elspeth Gibson's shop. Her black lace shirt and caviare beaded skirt have stood me in good stead this winter and are very easy to wear.

How often do you go shopping? Infrequently, I have three children and I work, so it leaves me with very little time. I shop when I need something or when I am on a business trip.

How important is fashion? Creating beautiful things that make people feel good is my passion.

What is your style motto? Smile — if you look happy you look good.

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IN THE DOCK

Only Clinton can save the Senate from a lengthy trial

When Thomas Jefferson returned to the United States from France, where he had been the Ambassador while his colleagues constructed the American Constitution, he asked George Washington why it had been considered necessary to create a Senate. The first American President reputedly poured his tea from cup to saucer and replied that, like the act he had just performed, the Senate would serve to cool the passions of the moment. It now falls to that chamber to live up to the expectations of the Founding Fathers and decide the fate of the Clinton presidency in a cool and timely fashion.

The prospect of an extended trial on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice is one that must fill even Mr Clinton's critics with foreboding. In 1868 it took the Senate 74 days to reach a vote that retained Andrew Johnson in office. The charges Mr Johnson faced were the essence of simplicity compared with the mountain of documentation that surrounds Mr Clinton's alleged offences. In those halcyon days the American Government did little more than operate the Post Office, collect import duties and maintain a minuscule Navy. Washington could come to a halt without the average American noticing the difference.

A trial of anything like that length next year would be an unmitigated disaster. Yet it is difficult to envisage what either Chief Justice William Rehnquist or the Senate leadership can do to make matters move with more momentum. They can hardly dismiss the articles of impeachment brought by the House of Representatives out of hand or without a hearing. The issue of perjury is relatively straightforward: few outside the President's inner circle do not accept that he lied under oath. The real issue is whether perjury in this instance is enough to expel an elected President from the White House.

The charge of obstructing justice is much more complicated. This brings together Mr Clinton's supposed attempt to persuade his secretary to endorse a false version of his

relationship with Monica Lewinsky, the circumstances under which gifts that he had given his intern were retrieved and concealed, and the implications of efforts undertaken to find Ms Lewinsky employment in New York City. All of these events are open, to some degree at least, to multiple interpretation. The Senate may find it impossible to avoid calling a number of witnesses for what could be protracted personal testimony. This suggests a trial of several weeks' duration.

Nor can the eventual outcome of this exercise be predicted with absolute certainty. It has been assumed, with considerable reason, that it is unlikely that the Senate will muster the two-thirds majority necessary to convict Mr Clinton. That forecast rests less on the fact that the Republicans hold only 55 of the 100 seats than on the Senate's reputation as a more deliberative, independent and non-partisan institution than the House of Representatives. The prospect of displacing a President over a series of misdemeanours made in a sexual context is not one that will fire many senators — Republican or Democrat — with the remotest enthusiasm.

Mr Clinton can hardly afford to take a Senate trial lightly. He is on precarious terrain over perjury, and this is made no better by his ridiculous attempts to reinvent the English language. If he persists in this strategy then he may find that respected Democrats such as Senators Byrd, Lieberman, Kerry and Moynihan feel they have no choice but to abandon him. The sensational resignation of Robert Livingston, Speaker-designate, has changed the atmosphere in the American capital. The public might yet come to regard the President's departure as preferable to interminable Senate proceedings. Mr Clinton may find that those who live by opinion polls also perish by them. This affair is in new and virtually uncharted territory. There is only one man, Mr Clinton, and one means, resignation, that can bring this constitutional crisis to an abrupt conclusion.

THE FOUR-DAY WAR

Much has been achieved, but there is still more to do

Tony Blair, George Robertson and General Sir Charles Guthrie made a convincing case yesterday for the damage done over the past four days to Iraq's military capabilities. In its own terms, Operation Desert Fox has been successful. It is, as the Prime Minister indicated, almost inconceivable that the use of so much firepower has not severely disabled the Iraqi army and set back considerably Saddam Hussein's biological, chemical and nuclear weapons programmes. In 96 hours, allied air power has proved more penetrating than 14 months of interrupted and obstructed UN weapons inspections.

However, as the Defence Secretary acknowledged, the Iraqi threat has been reduced rather than eliminated. In part, this reflects proper self-restraint by the American and British Governments. Saddam has cynically placed much of his more sophisticated equipment within hospitals and schools — confident that democracies would not target such facilities. Of necessity, the allied effort has concentrated on the infrastructure of mass destruction — delivery systems, key factories and the Republican Guard — rather than the biological and chemical materials themselves. It should therefore be assumed that Saddam retains such raw potential if not the means of rendering it effective.

It is inevitable that the nature of future policy towards Iraq should become the centre of attention. The British Government has been criticised for a stance which has appeared uncertain of the objectives. The Conservatives, led by Michael Howard, echoed those concerns yesterday. These complaints are not entirely fair, for at least three reasons. First, the anti-Saddam strategy is set predominantly in

Washington, not London. Secondly, allied aims, if uncertain today, have been even more incoherent over the past 18 months as UN inspection efforts collapsed in practice but were still upheld in theory. Thirdly, there are no easy, costless, options on Iraq.

There is little doubt that Operation Desert Fox represents a watershed. For the past seven years, Western policy towards Iraq has been predicated on an increasingly implausible inspections regime. It was hoped that economic sanctions might persuade those who matter in Baghdad that the demise of Saddam would enhance their interests. And, while it would be wrong to suggest that this approach has failed, it has not succeeded either. It is also irrelevant for future planning. Iraq is unlikely to invite UN inspectors back and, even if it did, there is no reason to presume that Uniscom could uncover Saddam's vast illegal arsenal.

This means that an entirely novel strategy must be implemented. The Prime Minister has outlined its core components: the active containment of Iraq which requires further bombing whenever Saddam seeks to repair his shattered infrastructure, and a much more vigorous enforcement of economic sanctions. The announced deployment of HMS *Invincible* to the Gulf early next year is an essential part of this updated formula. The United States and Britain also need to state unequivocally that the removal of Saddam Hussein is now their core objective. They must make it clear that Iraq would be swiftly restored into the international community if that happened. Mr Blair's stock is extraordinarily high in Washington at present. He should use that influence to persuade Mr Clinton to finish what he has started.

A DO AT THE DOME

It could be you at the party of the millennium

Forget existential angst. As the millennium approaches what will really be troubling half the population is how to celebrate the onset of a new era with style. Naturally, an obstinate few will still bicker about the calendar and whether, in the absence of a year-zero AD, the year 2000 will not really be 1999 after all. These niggles may plan to stay resolutely under their bedclothes as the midnight hour chimes. But the less finicky are more concerned about having fun. And any without a Vanuatu beach hut, a hotel suite or mountain pinnacle already bagged will still be looking for appropriate modes of revelry.

The Dome may provide a solution. According to an announcement expected this week, members of the general public are likely to account for about two thirds of the 10,000 guests expected on the evening the Dome opens. The people's millennium will, quite fittingly, be launched by representatives of us all. It could even be invited guests are expected to include members of the emergency services — people charities and voluntary groups — whose contribution to society merits their recognition and thanks. But away from the ease atmosphere of family and friends, under the unfamiliar umbrella of the

Dome, will these guests find the pleasure they really deserve?

Members of the public will probably have to make a great effort to reach Greenwich on the night. Fears that the Jubilee Line extension, plagued with delays, might not be ready in time to drop visitors right outside the Dome seem justified. But driving is not an option for any who wish to drink. And once guests do turn up, high expectations must be met. After a protracted season of Christmas parties, appetites can be jaded by the time of new year. People will expect more than a glass of cheap bubbly and a vol-au-vent or two, among a throng of name-tagged strangers. Peter Mandelson and his team will have to be assiduous as hosts. Like-minded guests will want to be introduced to one another. And the famous should not be corralled away into VIP pens. The "ordinary man" may think his effort worthwhile if he can chat with his favourite Spice Girl or exchange a few words with a sporting superstar. But most of all the millennial "do" at the Dome will need some sort of theme, some structuring idea. Those privileged to an invitation should come away uplifted — and not only by enjoyment.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Lack of strategy in 'Simple' solutions to breast cancer

From Mr Michael Hill

Sir, General Sir Michael Rose argues (article, December 18) that unless the West aims at ridding Iraq of Saddam and his regime it "would do better to abandon its strategy of confrontation, and attempt a policy of constructive engagement".

Logic dictates that he is correct. The Americans and the British seem to be approaching this problem in a gun-bro manner, with no specific strategy apparently in mind. In the last Gulf War, when the Allies invaded and bombed Iraq for 40 days and 40 nights, they failed either to rid the world of the evil of Saddam Hussein or to stop him in his manufacture of weapons of total destruction.

How can we expect that a few days of intensive bombing will be more successful?

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL HILL,
27 Bathgate Road, SW19 5PW,
December 18.

From Professor Patrick Collinson

Sir, I am not sure that George Galloway, MP, would be my first choice as standard-bearer in any good cause. Yet on this occasion he is surely in the right. I have never felt such contempt, and sorrow, for the constitution and management of the House of Commons (reports, December 18). The action which HM Government is taking in our name appears strategically threadbare, and is certainly diplomatically ill-judged, and morally repugnant.

I know I shall be asked: what would you do? I am not sure. But not this.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK COLLINSON,
Trinity College, Cambridge CB2 1TQ,
December 19.

From Dr R. Dawes

Sir, The course of history of Iraq is unlikely to be changed by the sort of military action being displayed by US and UK forces.

The future of Iraq lies in the hands of its people. Rather than bomb Saddam Hussein's military installations, surely a more effective UN policy would be to demonstrate support for the ordinary citizens. We need to work with them and, not as they must perceive at present, against them.

We should consider combining compassion and sophisticated military technology for a new kind of bombardment. How about an antibiotic pill parachute drop; an infant formula cruise missile; or the ultimate in harnessing care and smart weaponry — the laser-guided sandwich?

Yours etc,
R. F. H. DAWES,
23 Maidenhead,
Highnam, Gloucester GL2 8DJ,
December 18.

Clinton impeachment

From Mr Henry Thoresby

Sir, In your first leader today you criticise the Republicans for undermining the authority of Mr Clinton at a time of world crisis. Surely the most serious crisis faced by the West today is a relentless tide of decadence perfectly exemplified by a President whose contempt for morality is only matched by his contempt for the rule of law.

Yours faithfully,
HENRY THORESBY,
12 Wexford Road, SW12 8NH,
December 18.

From Mr Stuart Eastwood

Sir, If it is true that Clinton cheated at golf (article, "Bill cannot bomb his way out of this", December 19) then never mind other evidence: he surely has to go.

Yours faithfully,
STUART EASTWOOD,
8 Shrewsbury Mews, W2 5PN,
December 19.

Wedding date

From Dr Philip E. Roe

Sir, Was a Royal Doulton dinner service ever "at the top of the bourgeoisie bride's wedding list" as your leader states ("Gone to pot", December 11)?

Surely wedding lists are a more recent symptom of society going to pot. When, exactly, did couples start to specify their requirements?

Yours etc,
P. E. ROE,
157 Verulam Road,
St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 4DW,
philip.e.roe@btinternet.com
December 12.

Sport letters, page 27

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

London mayor's 'poisoned chalice'

From Mr Steve Norris

Sir, Whenever I have been asked about my mayoral ambitions during the last year I have always replied that I would wait to see the Government's Bill. As an ex-minister I know only too well that the devil is in the detail.

As Simon Jenkins made clear in his article on December 16, "Gordon's errand boys", John Prescott has now offered any potential mayor of London a poisoned chalice. Such powers as are transferred will be subject to control by Whitehall and, much more importantly, any money the new mayor raises from congestion taxes will subsequently not be guaranteed to be spent in the capital.

Personally I always suspected the Treasury would never accept hypothecation of revenue, and so it has proved.

In fact, the Bill has guaranteed one mayoral policy, whatever the outcome of the election. Given the prospect of taking all of the blame for introducing a new tax but guaranteed none of the revenue, no candidate will commit himself to congestion charges of any description. Thus Mr Prescott has achieved exactly the opposite of what he ostensibly wished.

Joined up Government? I think not.
Yours faithfully,
STEVE NORRIS
(Minister for Transport in London, 1992-96),
10 Afriston Road, SW11 6NN,
December 18.

Millennium books

From the Chairman of the Tyndale Society

Sir, There should be books in the Millennium Dome for many reasons. One is that London will continue to be the publishing centre of the world, another that British books have contributed to the experience of living in ways beyond calculation. Two deserve a special place, having wonderfully enriched human minds and spirits: the works of Shakespeare and the Bible in English (both are already on the BBC's mythical desert island, after all).

A First Folio of Shakespeare (1623) should have beside it a copy of the New Testament first translated by William Tyndale. As Sir Rowland Whitehead eloquently pointed out (letter, December 10; see also letter, December 14), it is the source of so much in our language and religion.

Members of the Tyndale Society worldwide will try to ensure we enter the 21st century alert to our unique heritage and its gift for the future.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID DANIELL,
Chairman, Tyndale Society,
10b Littlegate Street,
Oxford OX1 1QT,
December 16.

Preparing for the bug

From Mr Geoff Bliss

Sir, Action 2000 advises us to have a fortnight's rations in hand for next new year ("The joyous jitters bug", Libby Purves, December 15). This seems positively frugal. From observations in my local supermarket most people appear to get in two months' supplies at this time of year.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFF BLISS,
6 Applecroft, Park Street,
St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 2AP,
December 16.

From Lieutenant-Commander S. R. Hall, RN (ret'd)

Sir, I was much enlightened by Libby Purves's account of her computer meshing its brain with the Times's computer, having her article printed via a series of computer links, and eventually fuelling the vans which convey the newspapers through the night.

Alas, the process does not go far enough. Last Saturday I received about two-thirds of The Times at 10.49am, rather damp and severely mauled in the letterbox. It was accompanied by a small Christmas card inscribed, "From Darren, your morning paper boy."

I look forward, greatly, to the dawning of the new January 1, 1900, when computers will not have been invented and, besides, we shall again have the biggest navy in the world.

Yours faithfully,
S. R. HALL,
51 Carisbrooke Avenue, Hill Head,
Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3FR,
December 16.

From Mrs Kate Brookman

Sir, Like Libby Purves, I too enjoy my computer; but in a year when my roses had greenly, the children nits and the cat had fleas, it is with a sense of the inevitable that I assume my computer is saving the best bug for last.

Yours sincerely,
KATE BROOKMAN,
7 The Borough,
Moutcaute, Somerset TA15 6XB,
December 15.

From Professor Michael Baum

Sir, The American humorist, H. L. Mencken, once stated that "for every complex problem there is a simple solution and it's wrong". Breast cancer is an extremely complex problem and most of the simple solutions now on offer — such as breast cancer awareness months, league tables on breast cancer mortality and the promise in last year's White Paper on the NHS that next year no woman suspected of having breast cancer will have to wait more than two weeks to see a specialist — are populist interventions. They are, I believe, unlikely to contribute anything to the length or quality of life of women with breast cancer.

Breast cancer "awareness" campaigns are scaremongering and give out the wrong message. The widely quoted one in 12 figure for the development of breast cancer applies to women fortunate enough to live out all other risks to the age of 85, and the risk of dying of breast cancer is one in 27, not one in 12.

As a result of these campaigns our specialist clinics are overburdened with the frightened young women who suffer the natural phenomena of cyclical painful nodularity of the breast during their menstrual cycle.

The league tables on breast cancer mortality which you published on December 10 are absolutely uninterpretable to the lay public. The statistics on relative rates of cancer-specific mortality between regions are presumably corrected for the age of the population at an unspecified point of time. It is highly likely that the range of 81 to 119 is due merely to the play of chance.

Public service ethic

From the Reverend Dr Ian Bradley

Sir, A significant and heartwarming common theme links the Government's announcements on the future of the Post Office (report, December 8) and the care of the mentally ill (report and leading article, December 9).

Both these policy initiatives recognise the importance of public institutions, a specialism aligned fairly consistently over the last two decades and which seemed almost in danger of extinction.

The fact that the Post Office is to remain a public corporation, and not to be privatised, means much more than just the retention of the Queen's head on stamps and the royal insignia on pillar boxes. It acknowledges the public service ethic and commitment to social as well as economic values which have always characterised this particular institution.

The belated recognition that a

greater proportion of those with psychiatric illness need long and medium-term residential care also signifies a change of attitude towards institutions. I hope that it betokens a realisation by the Government that mental hospitals, so long and so unfairly criticised for being too institutional, often provide a much more secure and supportive community than the so-called care in the community which, in reality, often amounts to a room in a seedy bed-and-breakfast establishment or a cardboard box in a shop doorway.

What about some serious and practical support for other aspects of the public service ethic and the institutions which have so long supported it — for instance public service broadcasting and the BBC?

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BAUM
(Chairman,
Cancer Research Campaign,
Breast Cancer Trials Group),
Royal Free and University College
Medical School,
University College London,
67-73 Riding House Street, W1P 7LD,
December 10.

All that the current strategies will achieve will be to provoke an atmosphere of panic amongst the female population and a sense of paranoia amongst already overburdened specialist teams.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BAUM
(Chairman,
Cancer Research Campaign,
Breast Cancer Trials Group),
Royal Free and University College
Medical School,
University College London,
67-73 Riding House Street, W1P 7LD,
December 10.

Balliol protest

From Professor Sir Graham Hills

Sir, The Balliol protesters would do well to consider the wider aspects of their actions which will be seen by many as yet another defence of their privileged position (letter, December 12).

It is only a generation or so since all students at British universities paid fees. These were recouped from scholarships or bursaries, mainly in the form of mandatory awards from local authorities. This procedure allowed universities to exercise considerable freedom in whom they taught and what they taught. These were the good times for universities although they catered for only a tiny minority of the population, perhaps no more than 50,000 students in all.

Tornado's blast

From Mr Michael Gordon

Sir, Claims that Arthur Peppercorn's Al Pacific steam locomotives were Britain's best ever ("This steaming blast from the past", Weekend, December 12), I think, are exaggerated.

These engines were notably free-steaming, but a design fault made them prone to excessive lateral oscillation at speed. This was a characteristic not shared by the earlier Pacifics of Sir Nigel Gresley. A briefly chilled nose poked cautiously out of a rear coach window in 1955 was enough to observe our Al drive being rhythmically swung from side to side as he sat by the cab window on a speedy descent of Tuxford bank in the East Midlands.

The late O. S. Nock (obituary, October 8, 1994), asked at a 1950s meeting in Leeds which locomotive type he considered could challenge

The great sin of that system was its exclusivity. Even now, when well over a million students attend universities and colleges, it remains exclusive. The simple reason why so many young people are still excluded is that there is no room and no money for them. This is because the free-for-some arrangements were absurdly generous to people like the Balliol protesters who can well afford to make a modest contribution to the cost of not just their education but to that of others.

A good starting point for this debate would be: "From each according to his means; to each according to his needs."

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM HILLS,
2 Holm Burn Place,
Inverness IV2 6WT,
December 13.

Mallard's 126mph in 1938, ruled out the Al as being too unsteady at speed. However, it is encouraging to learn that design modification on *Tornado*, the new engine about to emerge from the Darlington Locomotive Works, should eradicate the fault; in any case, no Al was ever involved in a derailment at speed.

The Kylchap double exhaust on the AIs produced a rasping hiss, not a "full-throated roar"; one writer described the noise as that of paper tearing. *Mallard* was similarly equipped in 1938.

One can calculate that at 126mph her exhaust beats would have been ejected at over 50 per second, so the usual condescending terms "puffer" or "choo-choo" would scarcely have been appropriate.

Yours sincerely,
M. GORDON,
6 Lansdowne Road, Chesham,
Buckinghamshire HP5 2BA,
December 13.

Prices beyond compare

From Mr John Mellin

Sir, Might I suggest that in any future surveys on comparative prices across Europe (letters, December 15) you include an extra column for UK (excluding London).

In this part of the country £320,000 houses are even rarer than teachers who work a 55-hour week; £29 would buy a season ticket at the barber's and four adults could enjoy fish and chips with dandelion and burdock and still

have change from £10. Do tell me, what was the point of such a survey, which did not consider comparative incomes?

And can anyone explain why Italy would be the most expensive country in Europe in which to buy pizza and wine for four?

Yours faithfully,
J. MELLIN,
Meadow Field Farm,
Uley, Keighley,
West Yorkshire BD20 6HH,
December 8.

SOCIAL NEWS

The Queen's broadcast to the Commonwealth on Christmas Day will be produced as last year by Independent Television News. The producer will again be Sue Tinson.

In the United Kingdom, the broadcast will be transmitted, both on television and radio, at 3 pm on Christmas Day. In

Commonwealth countries local times will dictate the precise broadcast arrangements.

The text of the broadcast will be carried on the Buckingham Palace Web site (www.royal.gov.uk), and there will also be a link to the ITN Web site (www.itn.co.uk) for the audio/visual version.

Birthdays today

Mr F.G. Berkeley, former Chief Tacking Master of the Supreme Court, 79; Mr B.S. Collins, former chairman, Nabstock Group, 75; Miss Chris Evert, tennis player, 44; Miss Jane Fonda, actress, 61; the Earl of Haddington, 57; Sir James Hill, former MP, 72; Mr Walter Hogbin, former chairman, Taylor Woodrow International, 61; Mr Peter Johnson, Headmaster, Millfield, 51; Sir Frederick Lawton, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 87; Mr Geoff Lewis, racehorse trainer, 63; Mr W.M.M. Milligan, former Principal, Wolsley Hall, Oxford, 91; Mr Anthony Powell, C.H., author, 93; Sir John Quinton, former non-executive chairman, George Wimpey, 69; Flight Lieutenant W. Reid, VC, agricultural consultant, 77; Brigadier V.M. Rooke, former director, Army Nursing Services, 74; Mr Greville Starkey, former jockey, 59; Mr Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor, 54; Mr Peter Tiniuswood, author, 62; Sir Cyril Townsend, former MP, 61; Dr Kurt Waldheim, former President of Austria, 80; Professor Robert Worcester, chairman, MORI, 65.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield, Prime Minister 1868 and 1874-80, London, 1804; Archibald Campbell Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury 1869-82, Edinburgh, 1811; Joseph Stalin, Soviet leader, Gori, Georgia, 1879; Dame Rebecca West, novelist and critic, London, 1892.

DEATHS: F. Scott Fitzgerald, novelist, Hollywood, 1940; George Patton, American general of Second World War, Heidelberg, Germany, 1945; Eric Coates, composer, London, 1957; Sir John (Jack) Hobbs, cricketer, Hove, 1963.

Leeds Grammar School

Dr Mark Bailey has been appointed by the Governors of Leeds Grammar School to the post of Headmaster from September 1999. Dr Bailey takes over the position from Mr Bryan Collins who is retiring after 15 years service. Dr Bailey is currently Deputy Bursar, Professor in History, and Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, as well as an Affiliated Lecturer in the History Faculty of the University.

Wales & Chester Circuit

The following have been elected Officers of the Wales & Chester Circuit from January 1: Leader, Mr Christopher Pichford QC; Circuit Judge, Mr Robert Trevor Jones; Circuit Judge, Mr Keith Thomas; Swansea Junior, Mr Huw Rees.

Nature notes

EVERY winter, more cormorants follow the practice of coming inland to fish in reservoirs and lakes. These big, eel-eating birds stand with their wings spread out to dry on the dead branches of lake trees, or along mud spits. When they fly they look like large black crosses in the sky.

Most cormorants also have many cubs feeding on them, some of them winter visitors from the Continent. They dive for water-weed and eat it on the surface in a long, dripping thread hanging from their beak. They are quarrelsome birds, flying at each other with their necks stretched out like missiles.

Most blackcaps have left

Britain for further south, but a few have stayed behind and will come into gardens to feed at bird tables now that it is turning frosty.

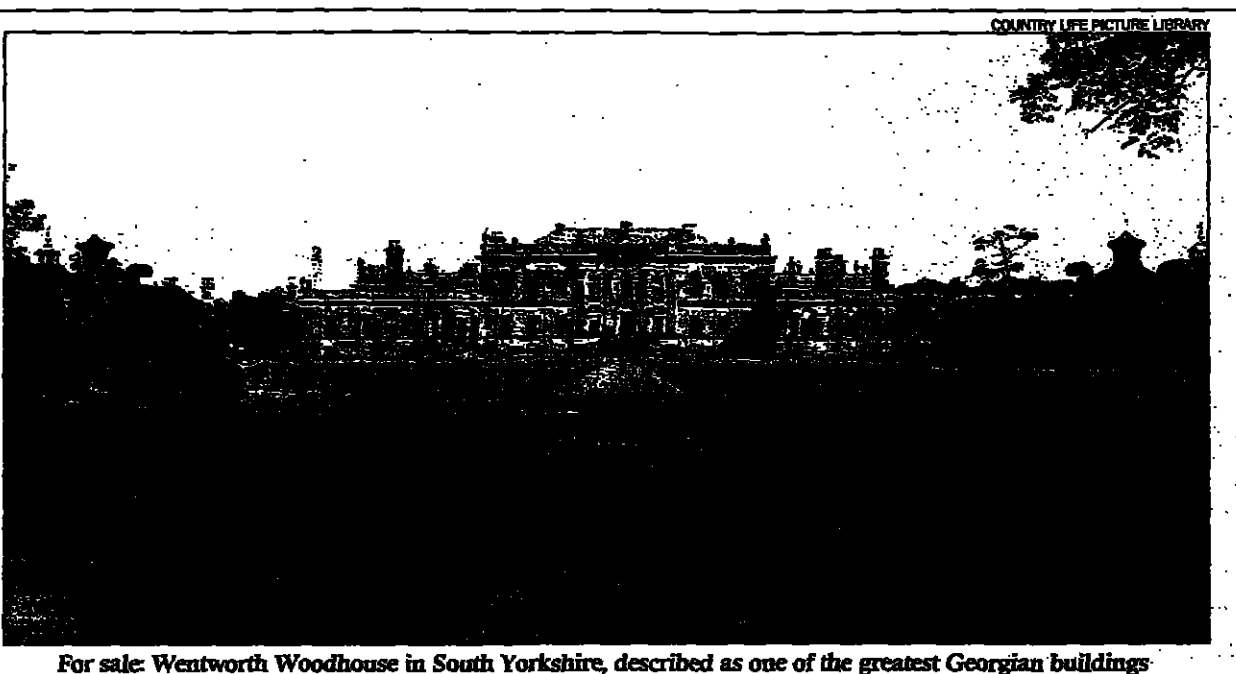
Great spotted woodpeckers have also become frequent garden visitors in recent years.

Many bramble bushes have large, lemon-yellow leaves on them, and some green leaves that will see the winter through.

By city pavements, shaggy soldier is still blossoming; it has tiny purple and yellow flowers, with hairy stems.

Nearly there is sometimes a flower called gallant soldier, which is very similar but has smooth stalks.

DJM



For sale: Wentworth Woodhouse in South Yorkshire, described as one of the greatest Georgian buildings

Wanted: buyer for stately home, 365 rooms — a snip at £1.5m

By Rachel Kelly, Property Correspondent

THE country's largest privately owned stately home, with a frontage twice the length of a football pitch and 365 rooms, is up for sale at £1.5 million.

Wentworth Woodhouse, near Rotherham, South Yorkshire, described by the Georgian Group conservation body as one of the greatest buildings of the Georgian age, was the former seat of the marquesses of Rockingham and Earl Fitzwilliam.

More recently the house has lain forlorn and neglected, its lawns unkempt and its paintwork peeling. It is now being sold with its surrounding 85 acres by the Swiss bank Julius Baer & Co through the agents S P D Saville and Strutt & Parker.

An endowment to secure the house's future and its opening for public benefit. A spokeswoman for the fund said: "We have yet to receive an application for funds and cannot comment."

The house was built by the first and second marquesses of Rockingham and the second marquess's nephew, the 4th Earl Fitzwilliam. Work began in the 1720s and continued for the rest of the century. There is a Baroque west front and a great Palladian east front which has work by some of the great craftsmen of the period, including Robert Adam, John Gibson and Henry Flitcroft.

After the death of the 8th Earl Fitzwilliam in a plane crash in 1948 without male issue, the family moved out of the main house and let the property on a series of leases but kept the freehold. The surrounding estate of about 2,000 acres is owned by two charitable trusts and a company in which Sir Philip Naylor-Leyland, the grandson of Earl Fitzwilliam, has a controlling stake.

Mr Dalglish refused to comment on speculation that Sir Philip might be interested in buying back the house for the family itself. The agents said that the house's relatively low price reflected its northern location and the amount of work that needs to be done to restore it to its former glory.

Mr Haydon-Baillie, 54, is the son of a surgeon from Worksop, Nottinghamshire. His rise to financial prominence began in the 1970s when he was connected with the asset-stripping Slater-Walker business, before he moved on to make a fortune buying undervalued companies.

He invested in Porton International, a buyer technology company that took its name from Porton Down, the germ warfare centre near Salisbury. The firm was launched on the promise that it would soon be marketing a cure for herpes, and it raised £76 million from City institutions in 1984. It went on to do well marketing drugs.

Mr Haydon-Baillie has extensive other properties, now for sale: He bought Cope House across the road from Kensington Palace. Cope House was valued at £10 million but it is understood that the bid offer so far has been around £5.5 million.

In 1994, Mr Haydon-Baillie invited the whole village of Wentworth when he married his cousin Samantha, but the couple have now separated. He has enjoyed a collection of historic aircraft and Rolls-Royces, which he turned into the Haydon-Baillie aircraft and naval museum in Hampshire. In recent years he had to sell the exhibits. The museum site has also been sold, together with another of his homes in the New Forest.

Marriages

Mr J.P. de Montigny and Miss M.V.M. Copeman. The marriage took place on Saturday in Lincoln's Inn Chapel of Mr Jonathan de Montigny, son of Mr John Mounsey-Smith, of Boundway, Hampshire, and the late Valerie Kennedy-Brown, to the Hon Jessica Newton, daughter of Lord Newton of Brunner, of Coggeshall, Essex, and of Mrs Janet Newton, of Greenwich, London. Canon W.B. Norman officiated.

The bride, who was given in marriage by her father, was attended by Hannah Huxley, the Hon Polly Newton, Miss Cariona MacGregor and Miss Emma Gilpin. Mr Matthew Grose was best man.

A reception was held in the Great Hall, Lincoln's Inn, and the honeymoon will be spent in South Africa.

Mr R.I. Edmondson and Miss S.L. Lindsay. The marriage took place on Saturday at the Temple Church of Mr Robin Edmondson, only son of Mr and Mrs David Edmondson, of Herwill, Wirral, to Miss Sarah Lindsay, second daughter of Sir John and Lady Lindsay, of St John's Wood, London. Canon Joseph Robinson officiated.

The bride, who was given in marriage by her father, was attended by Miss Antonia Lang, Lucy Anderson and Alice Anderson. Mr Brennan Molyneux was best man.

A reception was held at Middle Temple Hall and the honeymoon is being spent in Ireland.

Mr D.J. Griffin and Miss V.J. Latache. The marriage took place on Saturday, December 19, 1998, at St Philip and St James Church, Whitton, between Mr David John Griffin, son of Mrs Mary Griffin, and the late Mr Albert Griffin, and Miss Vanessa Jayne Latache, daughter of Mrs Pauline Latache and the late Mr Kenneth Charles Latache.

The bride, who was given in marriage by her brother, Mr Simon Latache, was attended by Dominic and Tristan Latache. Mr Jerald Zavalney, of Latache, was best man.

Mr N.G. Armstrong and Miss M.C. Dawson. The marriage took place on Saturday, December 19, in Taplow, Berkshire, between Mr Neil Armstrong, son of Mr and Mrs Alan Armstrong, and Miss Marise Dawson, daughter of Mr and Mrs Derek Dawson.

Mr S.A. Hall and Dr J.R. Watkins. The engagement is announced between Mr and Mrs Adrian Hall, of Tonbridge, Kent, and J.R. Watkins, daughter of Dr Peter Watkins and the late Mrs Gillian Watkins, of London.

Mr S.G.B. Jastet and Miss R.E. Henderson. The engagement is announced between Sebastian, elder son of Mr and Mrs Bernard Jastet, of London, and Fiona, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Arnold James Henderson, also of London.

Mr M.J. Smaile and Miss H.M. Lamb. Mr and Mrs Andrew Lamb, of Croydon, announce the engagement of their daughter, Helen, to Marcus, son of Mr and Mrs Victor Smaile, of Weston-super-Mare.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr S.J. Axford and Miss V.A. Pegrum. The engagement is announced between Stuart, younger son of Mr and Mrs Albert Axford, of Gravesend, Kent, and Victoria, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Robertson Pegrum, of Sevenoaks, Kent.

Mr A.R. Gammell and Miss F.J.M. London. The engagement is announced between Anthony, son of Mr and Mrs Ian Gammell, of Farnham, Surrey, and Fiona, daughter of Mr and Mrs Richard London, of Lintoe, Derby.

Mr G.A.J. Gardner and Miss C.E. Stone. The engagement is announced between Graham Alan James, only son of Mr and Mrs C. Alan Gardner, of Deganwy, and Carol Elizabeth, only daughter of Mr and Mrs K.H. Stone, of Northwood, Middlesex.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

DEATHS

ELMES - Gary aged 76 died peacefully at home on 18th December 1998. He was loved husband of Berta. Funeral service at Swindon Crematorium on Wednesday 23rd December at 11.30am. Family flowers only.

IN MEMORIAM - WAR

RAMS AERACTY, The Captain and member of the ship's crew who died on December 21st 1941.

FOR SALE

THE FINES - 1971 - 1998 other...
OVERSEAS TRAVEL
WINTER SPORTS

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FARESAVERS
FLIGHTSEEKERS
JETLINE

BIRTHS

COCKMAN - On 27th October to Amanda (née Rodger) and Andrew a daughter Ella Charlotte, a sister to Matthew, Christopher and Oliver.

IN MEMORIAM - PRIVATE

CAMPBELL - James W.C.A. 20.12.56. Requiescat in Pace.

FLATSHARE

DOMESTIC & DIRECTORY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COURT & SOCIAL
PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

DEATHS

HANPER - Audrey Isabel, on 17th December 1998, in her 90th year. Widow of John and beloved mother of Lachlan Kitchin and much loved.

TICKETS FOR SALE

CHERRY in London

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEGAL NOTICES

DEATHS

ANDERSON - Joan peacefully at home on the 17th December, aged 84. Much loved widow of Hubert (Bill) and mother of Mark and John. A memorial service will be held next year.

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEGAL NOTICES

DEATHS

CLARKE - Lt Col Ralf Lionel. Died December 18th. Funeral at Fawcett Church, Southbury, 11 a.m. Tuesday December 22nd.

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEGAL NOTICES

DEATHS

CORN - Lorna aged 86, on December 11th peacefully in hospital. Deceased wife of the late John Corn. Much loved mother of Gillian and Anthony and sister of Sylvia. She will be sorely missed by all her family and friends.

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEGAL NOTICES

DEATHS

DOUGLAS - George, suddenly on 17th December, husband of the late Yin Douglas. Funeral 10.00 am Tuesday 22nd December at Bolebone Road, Crawley. No flowers please.

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEGAL NOTICES

DEATHS

DOYLE - Barry a devoted husband, died and grand father at home on 18th December as a bright, burly lad as long. Good night, God bless, darling. Our love always Sheila, Barry and Gary.

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FOR SALE

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FOR SALE

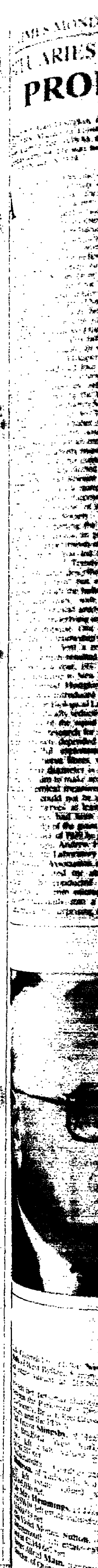
FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FOR SALE

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEGAL NOTICES



OBITUARIES

PROFESSOR SIR ALAN HODGKIN, OM

Professor Sir Alan Hodgkin, OM, KBE, FRS, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1978-84, died yesterday aged 84. He was born on February 5, 1914.

Alan Hodgkin was one of the outstanding scientists of his generation. From the very outset of his career as a neurophysiologist he performed one classical experiment after another, and modern views on the mechanism of conduction of the nerve impulse are largely based on his work — work that brought him election to the Fellowship of the Royal Society when he was barely 40, a (joint) Nobel prize at 49 and which left him, at the time of his death, the second most senior non-royal member of the Order of Merit.



Sir Alan Hodgkin, OM, shortly before becoming Master of Trinity

Alan Lloyd Hodgkin was born in Banbury, the second son of George Hodgkin and Mary (Wilson) Hodgkin, later Mrs Lionel Smith. His father, a close friend of Keith Lucas, in whose scientific footsteps Alan Hodgkin was to follow, died in Baghdad four years later on a mission to investigate distress among Armenian refugees driven from their homes by the Turks. After five years at Gresham's School, Holt, Hodgkin went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in October 1932 to read physiology, chemistry and zoology. Although he was not an entrance scholar, his scientific ability must have already been obvious to his contemporaries, for he was quickly elected to the undergraduate Natural Science Club, which in his case, as in a number of others, was remarkably successful at picking out a future Fellow, or indeed President, of the Royal Society.

Almost before completing the Natural Sciences Part II course in physiology, he began the experiments on cold block in frog nerves that led to his election as a Fellow of Trinity after only one year. He later described this work as "rather amateur" but, in fact, his early papers had all the hallmarks of the subsequent ones, with their direct, incisive and critical analysis of the physical events underlying conduction of the nerve impulse. One of the referees of Hodgkin's fellowship thesis, Professor A. V. Hill, lent a copy to Herbert Gasser, which resulted in an invitation to spend a year, 1937-38, at the Rockefeller Institute in New York. During this period Hodgkin met K. S. Cole, and was introduced at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory into the scientifically seductive but demanding world of the squid giant axon. Much of the research for which he was best known depended on a superlatively skilful exploitation of these very large nerve fibres, whose great size — their diameter is 0.5 to 1mm — enabled him to make accurate physical and chemical measurements of a kind which could not be undertaken in smaller nerves, at least until the basic principles had been established with the help of the giant axon. Thus in the summer of 1939 he joined forces with his pupil Andrew Huxley and, working at the Laboratory of the Marine Biological Association in Plymouth, first measured the absolute magnitude of the conducted action potential with a 0.1mm micropipette inserted longitudinally into a squid axon, and made the surprising discov-

ery that at its peak the electric potential across the membrane did not just fall to zero, but was reversed. Because of the outbreak of war, interpretation of this unexpected result had to wait for some years. Hodgkin spent the first few months of the war working on aviation medicine, and was then engaged for five years on the development of airborne radar for the RAF. His most important contribution was the design of a 10cm scanning and display system for night fighters. He then returned to the Physiological Laboratory in Cambridge, until 1952 as an assistant director of research, and from 1952 to 1969 as Foulerton Research Professor of the Royal Society. In 1969 he was appointed John Humphrey Plummer Professor of Biophysics in the university, but retained his laboratory in the department of physiology.

terms of voltage and time-dependent ionic conductances. The series of five papers which appeared in the *Journal of Physiology* in 1952 had an immense influence on cellular neurophysiology, and established a new approach that has since been fruitfully applied to many other excitable tissues. Only recently, in studies on the detailed structure of voltage-gated ion channels taking advantage of the techniques of molecular biology, has it been possible for any improvements to be made on the Hodgkin-Huxley analysis.

In the following 15 years or so the pattern of Hodgkin's researches consisted in an annual visit to Plymouth, generally in September before the beginning of university term, but sometimes later in the autumn when the squid were in better supply — with periods of acute frustration when they were not — interspersed with the writing up of results in Cambridge. With various collaborators he explored a wide range of problems in membrane permeability, using micro-injection and radioactive tracer techniques to investigate the ATP-dependent recovery mechanism responsible for the active extrusion of sodium from squid axons, and internal dialysis to study the role of calcium in excitation.

Working in Cambridge outside the squid season on the axons of cuttlefish imported from Plymouth, he discovered the phenomenon of single-file diffusion of potassium ions, and using frog muscle fibres he added appreciably to our understanding of the ionic permeability of muscle membranes and of the mechanism by which electrical excitation is coupled to mechanical contraction.

After the autumn of 1970, with the prospect of becoming President of the Royal Society that December, Hodgkin brought his annual seasons of experimentation at Plymouth to an end, and turned his attention to visual research that could be pursued in Cambridge. In 1962 he had collaborated with Mike Fortes at Woods Hole on the response of single ommatidia in the eyes of horseshoe crabs to flashes of light, and they were able to explain their results neatly in terms of a complex cascade of coupled chemical reactions.

In 1970 he embarked with Denis Baylor and others on a long series of experiments on intracellular recording from the eyes of turtles, and later on suction pipette recordings from isolated rods and cones of toads and salamanders. Subjected to his characteristic brand of rigorous quantitative analysis, these led to valuable contributions to our knowledge of the various steps initiated by the absorption of a quantum of light by rhodopsin, leading to the activation of the G-protein transducer and thence to the electrical response that is a brief reduction of the ionic current in the outer segment of the rod or cone. It appears that calcium ions are, for once, not the internal transmitter but still have an important regulatory role in the cascade.

In every project that he tackled, Hodgkin's extraordinary ability to penetrate immediately to the heart of the problem and to devise new ways of exploring aspects that had previously appeared to be inaccessible to experimental test quickly led to radically new

ideas about the underlying mechanisms. He was pre-eminently an experimentalist and always deprecated the formulation of theories which lacked a plausible physical basis or could not be examined quantitatively. At the same time he was unsurpassed in the fertility of his imagination in producing radically new explanations for experimental findings, and in the rapidity with which he was then able to come up with suggestions for critical tests of their validity.

He sometimes complained of his lack of formal training in the physical sciences and mathematics, but his physical intuition and his ability to solve difficult differential equations were the envy of his colleagues. Above all, he excelled in the performance with his own hands of exacting manipulations of single nerve and muscle fibres, and in his power to extract the maximum in his penetrating analysis of the results. Even in the small hours of a winter night at Plymouth — and because of the timing of the squid-catching programme there were many such occasions — his enthusiasm and concentration never wavered.

He was justly described as a scientist's scientist and felt no urge to involve himself in scientific policy-making or the creation of huge scientific empires. Yet his integrity and the conscientiousness that he brought to every task made him deeply revered and respected as President of the Marine Biological Association, 1966-76, of the Royal Society, 1970-75, and from 1978 to 1984 as Master of Trinity (where he was sad not to have his term extended when the proposal for him to stay on failed to get the requisite two-thirds majority at a college meeting).

In addition to the Nobel prize, he received many academic honours, and served as Chancellor of the University of Leicester, 1971-84. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1948, gave the Croonian Lecture in 1957 and a Tercentenary Lecture in 1960, and was awarded a Royal Medal in 1958 and the Copley Medal in 1965. He was created KBE in 1972 and was appointed to the Order of Merit in 1973.

While he was working at the Rockefeller Institute in 1938 he met Peyton Rous, the distinguished pathologist and his family. In 1944, during a brief visit to America, he married Marion Rous. A scientist's daughter herself and therefore used to the long periods of complete absorption in the laboratory and to the varied stresses of experiments going well or badly, she provided an ideal family background for her husband. At the same time she pursued a successful literary career of her own, and shared Hodgkin's wide interests in books and pictures.

The warmth and hospitality of their homes in the city of Cambridge and at the Master's Lodge in Trinity, gave the greatest pleasure to their many friends. In the latter years of Hodgkin's confinement to a wheelchair he wrote an eloquent autobiography entitled *Chance & Design: Reminiscences of Science in Peace and War* (1992). This summed up not only his science but also his Quaker upbringing and his family life in a most engaging fashion. His wife and their three daughters and a son survive him.

COLONEL RODERICK HILL



Colonel Roderick Hill, DSO, former Lord-Lieutenant of Monmouthshire and Gwent, died on November 21 aged 94. He was born on June 9, 1904.

RODERICK HILL won his DSO in Belgium in September 1944, when the 5th Battalion Coldstream Guards, which he was commanding, came under heavy fire after crossing the Albert Canal. The battalion, operating with the 5th Guards Armoured Brigade, mounted one attack after another against German anti-tank guns despite suffering heavy casualties. After 24 hours they opened a gap in the enemy lines, enabling other formations to break through and continue the battle on a wider front.

Hill was a regular officer with 13 years' experience before the war broke out. He was at Dunkirk in 1940 and was mentioned in dispatches while fighting with the 2nd Battalion in Tunisia in 1942 before being given his own command in France. He was later decorated by the Dutch for capturing and holding a large German depot before the war ended. He then took over 1st Battalion, which formed part of the occupying army in West Germany.

Returning to Britain, he led the Guards training battalion before being promoted to colonel of the regiment in 1949. He commanded the King's Birthday Parade in 1950, when George VI, who was not well enough to ride, drove to Horse Guards in a carriage. Two years later, following the King's death, Hill was one of those who mounted a vigil around the coffin as it lay in state in Westminster Hall.

He was offered a brigadier's posting in West Germany but turned it down because he wanted to spend more time at the family home in Monmouthshire after so much separation in the war. He thus retired in October 1952 and spent the rest of his life in public service.

Edward Roderick Hill was born at Woolwich, the son of an officer in the Royal Artillery. When he was only three however, his father died from wounds received at Lady-smith in the Boer War and "Roddy" was brought up by his mother and a maiden aunt. As his father had been one of seven, he boasted 42 first cousins.

Roddy went from Winchester to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he read history and hunted with the Magdalen and New College beagles before being commissioned into the Coldstream Guards in 1926.

After leaving the Army, he wrote (together with the

Earl of Rosse) *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division 1941-45* which was published in 1956. By this time back at St Arvans Court near Chepstow, he entered public life in the same year, with his appointment as High Sheriff of Monmouthshire. He became a Deputy Lieutenant in the following year, Vice-Lieutenant in 1963 and Lord-Lieutenant two years later, succeeding his daughter's father-in-law, Lord Raglan. He continued as Lord-Lieutenant of Gwent after the local government reorganisation of 1974 (exchanging the rose emblem on his cap badge and buttons for the Prince of Wales's feathers), finally retiring in 1979 aged 75.

He accompanied the Queen at the opening of the first Severn Bridge in 1966 and during her Silver Jubilee tour of 1977 — as well as attending the 1969 investiture of the Prince of Wales at Caernarfon.

He was chairman at various times of Chepstow Rural Council, the Curlew Hunt, the governors of the Monmouth Schools for boys and for girls and of Chepstow Racecourse. His other appointments included that of honorary colonel of 104 Light Air Defence Regiment (Volunteers).

Two buildings were named after him: Roderick Hill House in Tredegar, run by the British Legion (of which he was president), and the Roderick Hill Lodge in Chepstow, reflecting his position as Provincial Grand Master of the Freemasons. It is said that when Hill took command of the Coldstream Guards 5th Battalion in France, he turned up looking immaculate, in sharp contrast to the weary mud-stained troops he was introduced to. But he quickly raised their morale, partly by his own cool confidence, and partly by imposing his own high standards of self-discipline, with every guardsman standing to attention when being addressed, however furious the fighting around them.

Everything was going to be all right, he would reassure them, speaking slowly and deliberately, as if he was underlining every word. The same qualities of calmness and correctness were to characterise Roderick Hill throughout his life.

His wife Rachel, whom he married in 1934, died 15 years ago and is commemorated by a stained-glass window which he placed in St Arvans church.

Hill himself then moved to live near his daughter in Oxfordshire, where he spent part of his time helping to restore the Magdalen College library and conducting visitors around Christ Church Cathedral. His daughter and a son survive him.

ALLAN GRIFFITH

Allan Griffith, AM, Australian foreign policy adviser, died on November 23 aged 76. He was born on May 30, 1922.

A LONG-TIME colleague once called Allan Griffith "Malcolm Fraser's John the Baptist", and certainly he was one of the Australian Prime Minister's most effective foreign policy advisers. He was an independent thinker on issues as divergent as Zimbabwe, Australia's security in the Indian Ocean, the Great Barrier Reef marine park, Aboriginal land rights and Commonwealth Games sporting contacts.

Griffith could take a basic idea from Fraser and turn it into a reasoned policy with an Australian perspective. But he also came up with his own initiatives. He encouraged Fraser to resist the ambitions of the Soviet Union and to persuade the industrialised Western nations to help the poorer ones of the Third World.

In a Civil Service where anonymity and conformity ruled, Griffith stood out as a character. He was a careless dresser, and his rumpled appear-

ance could lead people to underestimate him. But he had a penetrating intellect, and was a passionate Australian and proud Queensland.

His beginnings were humble. Allan Thomas Griffith was born at Toogoolawah, Queensland, the son of a butcher, and grew up in the timber-milling village of Jimna, near Brisbane. From Jimna's one-teacher primary school, he went with a scholarship to the Church of England Grammar School at Brisbane.

During the war he served as a radio operator in the RAAF, and while sweating it out in the jungles of Papua New Guinea and Borneo, he felt the need for further education. At first he could find only a book on algebra, but he arranged for other books to be sent, and so passed the matriculation exam for Melbourne University. He took his degree in political science at Queen's College.

He joined the Prime Minister's Department in 1952 on a recommendation to Menzies from Sir Frederic Eggleston, and he went to work in the external relations branch. With the advent of the Whitlam

Government he found himself marginalised, but he then became a special adviser when Fraser became Prime Minister.

Satisfying the requirements of both Queensland and Papua New Guinea when negotiating the Torres Strait border treaty was his first tough assignment, and it earned him the praise of the Foreign Minister, Andrew Peacock.

Griffith had a great part in helping to fulfil Fraser's commitment to help to end the civil war in Rhodesia and in bringing Margaret Thatcher to accept the terms for settlement and the launching of Zimbabwe, as negotiated at Lancaster House.

As Griffith wrote in his book *Conflict and Resolution*, published a few days after his death: "The most work of constructive significance was achieved in 1975, when I negotiated a formula for ending the civil war in Zimbabwe (established a pattern) ceasefire, transitional government and an internationally supervised election toward an agreed constitutional objective." Griffith took part in the subsequent process in Namibia, and, after retirement, in Cambodia.

His usefulness to successive Prime Ministers may actually have hindered his career, since they were reluctant to promote him because he was so good at what he was doing. In retirement he continued in his quiet way to work on sensitive international questions, particularly in healing the breach between Australia and France.

At the invitation of Sir Zelman Cowan, the former Governor-General of Australia who had become Provost of Oriel College, Griffith began residence at Oxford in 1987 (he continued this periodically for the rest of his life). In 1993 he gained an M Litt with his thesis on *Democratic Legitimation in Zimbabwe and Namibia*, for which he also received the Marchioness of Winchester Prize. This year, while in Oxford completing his book, he was elected a visiting fellow of Oriel.

A warm-hearted and generous man, steadfast in friendship and devoted to his family, Griffith bore the debilitating cancer which led to his death with great fortitude.

He is survived by his wife Mary and three daughters.

Latest wills

Lady Gwendoline Hetie Nichols, of West Byfleet, Surrey, left estate valued at £13,265 net. She left her personal chattels between the Parkinson's Disease Society, British Red Cross Society and the PDSA. Jack Trevor Singsby, of Hea-Jack, Bradford, West Yorkshire, left estate valued at £4,447,317 net. Gordhadas Nainchandra, of Gorthadas Bhatnagar, of Tadworth, Surrey, left estate valued at £3,995,036 net. Lily May Hemmings, of London SW19, left estate valued at £3,640,519 net. Ella Violet Monica Sutton, of Bourne-mouth, left estate valued at £3,144,687 net. James Alfred Main, company director, of Quanton, Birming-

ham, left estate valued at £2,355,737 net. Monica Lucy Ann Strickland, of Whitwell, York, left estate valued at £2,537,496 net. Irene Frances Griffith, of Welbourn, Lincoln, left estate valued at £1,192,299 net. She left £1,000 to both St Barnabas Hospice, Lincoln and the City of Lincoln Association for the Care of the Elderly. Maurice Jones Griffiths, of Cefnwygrug, Aberhosan, Machynlleth, Powys, left estate valued at £1,339,307 net. George Harbottle, of Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, left estate valued at £1,266,618 net. He left £5,000 to St Nicholas Parish Church, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne; £2,000

to Northumberland Golf and South Northumberland Cricket and Tennis Club. Annie Eleanor Hartley, of Farmoor, Oxford, left estate valued at £1,041,678 net. Elizabeth Nancy Hoare, of Odham, Hampshire, left estate valued at £939,724 net. Reggie Iredale, of Norwood Green, Halifax, West Yorkshire, left estate valued at £1,078,783 net. Joanne Hubbard, of Effingham, Leatherhead, Surrey, left estate valued at £1,088,039 net. Thomas Henry Lawton, retired surgeon, of Alrewas, Burton on Trent, Staffordshire, left estate valued at £1,859,297 net. Barbara Longbottom, of Cambridge, left estate valued at £1,275,331 net.

Francis Brian O'Connor, of Widnes, Cheshire, left estate valued at £1,214,339 net. Pamela Evelyn Priestley, of Lewes, East Sussex, left estate valued at £1,063,567 net. Marylyn Scott, of Outwell, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, left estate valued at £1,594,386 net. He left his collection of Hovercraft to the Hovercraft Museum Trust at Gosport together with £20,000. Arnold Herbert Robert Taylor, of London W12, left estate valued at £1,418,744 net. Peter Basil Trier, of Greenham Common, Newbury, Berkshire, left estate valued at £1,318,568 net. Thomas Alexander Watson, of Sevenoaks, Kent, left estate valued at £1,597,346 net.

16 DIE IN LIFEBOAT'S RESCUE ATTEMPT

FROM CRAIG SETON IN MOUSEHOLE, CORNWALL

EIGHT people and the eight people they went to rescue on a stricken coaster died yesterday in hurricane-force winds and mountainous waves off the Cornish Coast. The Penlee lifeboat, launched from the village of Mousehole, was wrecked after braving 40ft waves to pluck four people to safety from the coaster *Union Star*, including a mother and two teenage girls travelling with their stepfather captain.

The Royal National Life-boat Institute has started an urgent inquiry into the disaster. The tiny fishing community in Mousehole, where all the men of the Penlee lifeboat were stationed by the loss of relatives and friends as questions began to be asked about what went so tragically wrong in the darkness off the rugged Cornish cliffs. The drama had started just after 6pm on Saturday and ended about four hours later with the loss of the two vessels, the lifeboat *Solomon Browne* mysteriously smashed to pieces and the coaster *Union Star* thrown

ON THIS DAY

December 21, 1981

The Penlee lifeboat, *Solomon Browne*, had a record to be proud of: in the course of its 238 launchings it had saved 91 lives.

aground and overturned against rocks off Laid's End. The coaster had been on its maiden voyage. Vital evidence about what happened could lie with the skipper of a Dutch tug, the *Noord Holland*, based at Newlyn, which offered to tow the coaster when it first got into difficulties after its engines failed but which in fact never became involved in the rescue operation. The coaster initially turned down the salvage contract offered by the tug; the owners of the coaster subsequently agreed a contract

but by the time the tug reached the scene, it was too late to help.

It became clear that as the *Union Star* started drifting towards the rocks the *Solomon Browne* got alongside at least once and took off four people including the captain's wife. The lifeboat radioed that it was returning for more survivors but nothing more was heard.

After midnight the first wreckage of the *Solomon Browne* was washed up on beaches quite close to Mousehole. Four bodies were found: three lifeboatmen, including Trevelyan Richards, the 56-year-old coxswain, and Mrs Dawn Morton, the wife of the master of the 1,400-ton *Union Star*.

According to information supplied by coastguards who monitored the drama and the log of a rescue helicopter from RAF Culdrose, the *Union Star*, carrying ferries from Dublin, never sent out a Mayday call or flares but asked for assistance at about 6pm on Saturday. According to Michael Sutherland, the deputy launching authority for the Penlee lifeboat, between 6pm and 6.30pm the captains of the tug and coaster were in conversation over their radios about the question of assistance for the *Union Star*. *Union Transport*, the owner of the coaster, last night denied a report that it had told Captain Morton to refuse an offer of assistance from the *Noord Holland*.

NEWS

Tomohawk sub for Iraq watch

Britain's first nuclear-powered submarine to be armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles is expected to be sent to the Gulf to join the aircraft carrier HMS Invincible which was ordered to leave for Iraq-watch duty after Christmas.

The announcement that the carrier, equipped with Sea Harriers and Sea King helicopters, is to return to the Gulf where it deployed earlier this year, was made by Tony Blair as he revealed details of last week's four-day air campaign. Pages 1-4.

Hope for end to Clinton ordeal

Faced with President Clinton's insistence that he will not resign and polls showing that impeachment has made him more popular than ever, senior senators began moves to spare the country the ordeal of making him stand trial for high crimes and misdemeanours. Pages 1, 10, 11

Missing girl sought

Police began a nationwide hunt for the two-year-old daughter of a young mother who was stabbed and beaten to death in her home. Sharon Lester, 24, was found by her mother, lying in a ground-floor room in her terraced home in Liverpool. Page 5

German doubts

Germans, like other Europeans, have been stunned at the speed with which Washington has hurried towards the impeachment of President Clinton. The new Social Democratic-Green Government had been poised to renegotiate its relationship with the United States. Page 12

Parents victory

A child of ten, whose family battled for years to have her recognised as a girl, has been christened with her new name. Page 5

Never quiet

On the otherwise blank television screen in Ronnie Flanagan's office at RUC headquarters were the words "All Quiet". Elsewhere in the United Kingdom that message would suggest tranquillity. Page 6

Branson flies on

Richard Branson overcame illness to take the helm of his billion and fly it through a perilous 26-mile corridor between steered the vast ICG Global Challenger from midnight until dawn. Page 7

Lockerbie memory

"The actions of good people can overcome evil," said Bert Ammerman, an American visiting Lockerbie for the tenth anniversary of the bombing that killed his brother. Page 9

Prescott defiance

John Prescott reiterated yesterday that he did not support closer collaboration by Labour with the Liberal Democrats, and ruled out sitting in a Cabinet with their leader, Paddy Ashdown. Page 6

Pizza Index hits a new high

Wags in the White House have dubbed their predicament the "impizzament crisis". In Washington the depth of a political crisis is measured by what is known as the Pizza Index. The bigger the problem the more pizza they have delivered. In the days before the impeachment debate President Clinton's team ate themselves to a new record. Page 11



A boy wanders through a field of drying gourds in Abino, Central Japan. They will be used as containers for rice wine

BUSINESS

Jobs gloom: Job prospects are the worst they have been for five years, says the Manpower survey of more than 2,000 employers. Page 40

NPI windfall: A minimum £300 "windfall" will be paid next year to 630,000 people with life assurance or pensions policies issued by NPL AMP, the Australian insurer, is buying NPI. Page 40

Defence suspense: British Aerospace will be under pressure this week to decide whether it should merge with just DaimlerChrysler Aerospace of Germany or strike a three-way deal with DaimlerChrysler and GEC. Page 40

Buyout slump: The number of company buyouts slumped in the Autumn after market turbulence and the threat of recession. Page 36

The year's best: From the authenticity of Saving Private Ryan to the sheer size of Titanic, the top ten films of 1998 are chosen by Geoff Brown. Page 33

Thumbs down: Phyllida Lloyd's new production of Carmen for Opera North is a desperately old-fashioned and tedious staging of one of opera's supreme masterpieces, writes Rodney Milnes. Page 34

US imports: The outrageous Los Angeles band Marilyn Manson are making their only British appearance of the year at the Britton Academy. Page 34

Ending well: The final programme of the LPO's Rimsky-Korsakov Festival featured a dazzling performance of Scheherazade conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch. Page 34

Cutting costs: Only the strong-willed are capable of looking at their credit-card slips after a hefty supermarket shop. At no time of the year is this truer than at yuletide. Thankfully there is good cheer on this front. For the second year running there has been a fall in the cost of Christmas. Page 13

Crisis move: Desperation has forced many stores to start their sales already. Page 13

Manhattan man: He hates the New York scene, yet it loves him. Meet the former surfer and factory worker, Tracy Faith, who aspires to Ralph Lauren's crown. Lisa Armstrong, Fashion Editor, interviews him. Pages 14, 15

Premiership: Arsenal, the title-holders, defeated Leeds United 3-1 at Highbury to move back into contention in the FA Cup. Page 25

Crickets: Michael Atherton, the acting England captain, scored a magnificent double century against an Australian XI in Hobart to give the team a welcome tonic before the fourth Test match. Page 22

Rugby union: Bath's bubble looks to have well and truly burst after years of domination on the domestic front, as another defeat on Saturday testifies. Page 31

Television sport: Never has one sport dominated television viewing figures such as football this year. Of the top 30 viewing figures in sport, 29 came from the national game. Page 23

Football: David Platt, the former England captain, made his debut as a coach in Italy yesterday when his new Sampdoria charges enjoyed an encouraging 2-2 draw with AC Milan. Pages 23, 27

9, 10, 18, 25, 28, 48, Bonus 34. Five winners each won £25 million. 26 won £91,422 for five numbers and the bonus; 1,314 won £1,130 for five numbers; 78,355 won £41 for four numbers and 1,377,715 won £10 for three numbers.

Preview: The Canterbury Tales, an animated modern-language version of Chaucer. (BBC2, 7.30 pm) Review: I blame the Spice Girls. All costume drama now have a feisty female heroine, says Paul Hoggart. Pages 38, 39

In the dock

There is only one man, President Clinton, and only one means, resignation, that can bring America's constitutional crisis to an abrupt conclusion. Page 17

The Four-Day War

The United States and Britain need to state unequivocally that the removal of Saddam Hussein is now their core objective. They must make clear that Iraq would be swiftly restored to the international community if that happened. Page 17

A Do at the Dome

Members of the public are to be invited to a millennial party at the Dome. But Peter Mandelson will have to be an assiduous host if they are to enjoy themselves. Page 17

MAGNUS LINKLATER

Ten years after Lockerbie, we are still attempting to identify the perpetrators of that outrage, the worst single act of terrorism since the war. Or rather, we have decided instead to find a scapegoat. Page 16

PETER RIDDELL

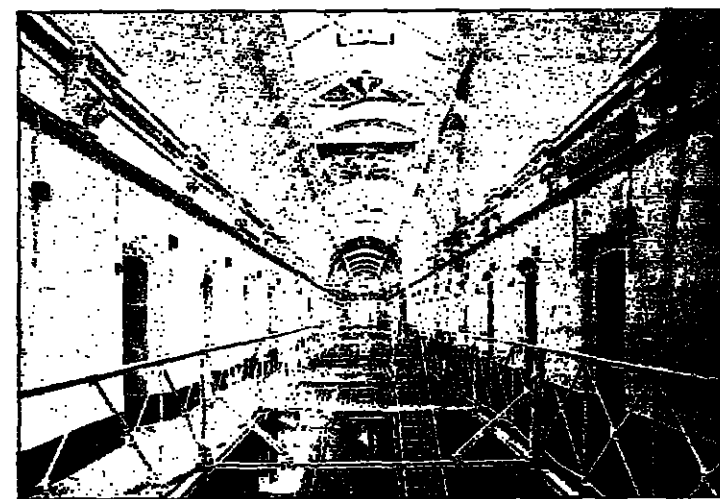
The Government's prospects and popularity continue to depend, possibly on an unhealthy extent, on Mr Blair himself. The other big players are all in his shadow. Page 16

William REES-MOGG

Nowadays, in our less romantic age, ten days from first meeting to accepting a proposal would be regarded as rather rapid. My parents were happily married for 42 years. Page 16

Professor Sir Alan Hodgkins, Master of Trinity, Allan Griffin Australian policy adviser, Colonel Frederick Hall, Lord-Lieutenant. Page 19

Iraq: President Clinton: Millennium Dome; breast cancer; mayor of London. Page 17



TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

ARTS

The battle over the historic Oxford Castle prison heats up

LAW

What price should be put on the death or injury of a loved one?

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,980

A crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1 through 29. The grid is partially filled with letters, and some cells are empty. The puzzle is titled 'THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,980'.

- ACROSS
1 Friendly enquiry - concerning state of contract? (4,6)
7 Windswept road and rail junction (4)
9 City girl in Delaware deprived of social standing (9)
10 Very boring - female more so than male? (6)
11 Avoid harbouring guerrilla leader in certain quarters (6)
12 Confused over such substitutes for cash (8)
13 Imperative for one to have judgment reversed (4)
15 Using special powers of communication, transformed the place with it (10)
18 It contains material for a great many stories (10)
20 French master responsible for courses (4)
21 Ability to inspire is evident in Dailly Mall? Not half (8)
24 Impulsive general's assistant involved in plan (6)
27 Italian who painted birdman (6)
27 Irregular dole woman accepted in place of riches (2,6)
28 Speculator's scene of action out East (4)
29 Gave situation where you, say, grew up (10)
DOWN
2 Remaining beasts carry too much (9)
3 Graceful girl going up Strand in silence (5)
4 A store we rearranged, beginning to retail perfume (4,5)
5 Among richer villagers it flavours cooking (7)
6 Miserable but mostly for Hindu sake (5)
7 Unfeeling parent raised male in top room (9)
8 Top person that's graduated? (5)
14 Winning? Not after this, surely (9)
16 Emergency worker came with rapid movement (9)
17 European who brings diamonds ashore? (9)
19 Period of stability overdue in Byzantine city (7)
22 Elevate composer, however had change of heart (5)
23 Like some waves thus seen round edges of ocean? (5)
25 Sporting event for non-English bowler (5)
Times Two Crossword, page 40

WEATHER

London, Road and Weather conditions
UK Weather - All regions 0236 444 910
UK Roads - All regions 0236 401 430
Met Office 0236 401 300
Met Office 0236 401 300
Met Office 0236 401 300

Weather by Fax
Dial 0236 followed by area number from your fax
Fax Country 410 332
Fax UK 410 332
Fax Ireland 410 341
Fax France 410 336
Fax Germany 410 337
Fax Spain 410 338
Fax Italy 410 339
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Fax Greece 410 341
Fax Turkey 410 342
Fax Japan 410 343
Fax Australia 410 344
Fax New Zealand 410 345
Fax South Africa 410 346
Fax India 410 347
Fax Singapore 410 348
Fax Hong Kong 410 349
Fax Taiwan 410 350
Fax Thailand 410 351
Fax Malaysia 410 352
Fax Philippines 410 353
Fax Indonesia 410 354
Fax Vietnam 410 355
Fax Cambodia 410 356
Fax Laos 410 357
Fax Myanmar 410 358
Fax Brunei 410 359
Fax Timor 410 360
Fax Papua New Guinea 410 361
Fax Solomon Islands 410 362
Fax Vanuatu 410 363
Fax Fiji 410 364
Fax Tonga 410 365
Fax Samoa 410 366
Fax Tokelau 410 367
Fax Christmas Island 410 368
Fax Norfolk Island 410 369
Fax Cook Islands 410 370
Fax Niue 410 371
Fax New Caledonia 410 372
Fax French Polynesia 410 373
Fax Wallis and Futuna 410 374
Fax French Southern Territories 410 375
Fax Antarctica 410 376
Fax Monaco 410 377
Fax San Marino 410 378
Fax Vatican City 410 379
Fax Liechtenstein 410 380
Fax Andorra 410 381
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Fax Jersey 410 383
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Fax Isle of Man 410 385
Fax Channel Islands 410 386
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Fax British Indian Ocean Territory 410 388
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UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

LYNNE TRUSS

In search of Christmas cheer
PAGE 27

OPENING SALVO

Atherton leads by example
PAGE 22

MANAGING NICELY

Platt makes a promising start in Genoa
PAGE 23

TIMES SPORT



MONDAY DECEMBER 21 1998

WORLD CUP STARS SHINE AS CHAMPIONS REJOICE TITLE PAGE



Petit crowns Arsenal's victory over Leeds United at Highbury yesterday by beating Martyn to score their third goal. It was a triumph that re-established the champions as Premiership contenders once again. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Arsenal thaw, Leeds freeze

A FEW years ago, Dave Bassett hit upon the idea of taking his Sheffield United team out for a Christmas party at the beginning of August. Season after season, they seemed to rouse themselves around the turn of the year after a few months of torpor and torture. Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, may not have much in common with Happy Harry, but a summer Christmas is one idea he may be tempted to copy.

This time last season, Arsenal were 13 points off the pace in the FA Cup. They were in a crisis. Thus far this season their form has been so inconsistent that they have rarely inherited a mention in title discussions. The festive period, though, has a habit of bringing them more presents than an eight-year-old with a bulging stocking.

Ominous memories of the startling transformation they effected in their fortunes last season were rekindled at Highbury yesterday afternoon, when they dismissed Leeds United, the team with the best form in the division, with a 3-1 victory courtesy of goals from Dennis Bergkamp, Patrick Vieira and Emmanuel Petit, three men who are only just starting to rediscover their best form.

The victory moved them up one place in the table to sixth, but they are now only four points behind the leaders, Chelsea, who went to the head of the top division for the first time in nine years thanks to their win over Tottenham Hotspur at Stamford Bridge on Saturday. If Chelsea appear to have assumed the championship mantle for London clubs this season, Arsenal are not far behind.

All the signs of recovery and excellence were on view yesterday. Crucially, Marc Overmars, the left winger whose 16 goals were so important to their Double-winning campaign last season, shook off the malaise that seems to have been affecting him since his return from the World Cup finals in France. He tormented Gunner Halie down the Arsenal left and was a constant threat.

Chelsea may be top of the table but, Oliver Holt reports, there are signs of life at Highbury

Even more important, Vieira and Petit looked ready to embrace battle again. Their seasons, too, have been spoilt by the fatigue that afflicted them after their triumph in France, by injury and by the controversy that has hung over Vieira since his involvement in the unsavoury incidents that marred Arsenal's game against Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough on September 26.

If Vieira's escape from suspension at his recent Football Association hearing in Birmingham was a good omen for Arsenal, then better was to come yesterday. Their victory was sealed with a fine third goal from Petit, a goal that was strikingly

TOP SEVEN

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	18	8	8	1	29	17	33
Aston Villa	17	9	6	2	27	17	33
Man Utd	16	9	7	3	36	23	31
Middlesbrough	15	7	8	3	30	21	30
Leeds	14	7	8	3	29	17	29
Arsenal	13	7	8	3	20	11	28
West Ham	10	6	5	6	22	22	23

similar to the one with which he finished off Brazil in the World Cup final on July 12.

Add to that the inspirational performance of Bergkamp, who scored the first, made the other two and generally looked back to his creative,

floating, unremarkable best, and the fact that Tony Adams, the last of the long-term injured, will begin training again today, then Arsenal appear set fair for a combative 1999.

There was even a sending-off to seal their victory. Indiscipline was a feature of their play last season, a failing that seemed to inspire them rather than defeat them, and Gilles Grimandi volunteered for that duty against Leeds, dismissed in the 86th minute for aiming a head-butt at Alan Smith only 14 minutes after he had come off the substitutes' bench.

The win did not affect Chelsea's position at the top of the table, although they will be knocked from

their perch if Aston Villa get a point against Charlton Athletic at The Valley tonight. Chelsea have put a fine run together, one that stretches for 17 unbeaten league games, and they deserve their place in the sun.

Manchester United will be in the mix too, of course, but they have not yet shown the consistency that everyone feared would come with their break from involvement in European competition. Their defeat at home to Middlesbrough on Saturday means that they have not won for six games. Just like last season, when they led Arsenal for so long, everyone has been assuming that they will effortlessly move up a gear when they need to, but so far the shift in pace and effort has not been forthcoming.

The rest of the Premiership, though, including the surprise candidates, Villa, is holding its breath, telling each other that Arsenal cannot repeat the astonishing charge to the title that they mounted last season.

"Arsenal will be there at the end," David O'Leary, the Leeds manager and one of Arsenal's favourite sons, said. "I am staying with Manchester United for the title because you have got to see your bets through, but I know that Arsenal will be there, too. Last season they put an exceptional run together, the sort of sequence that you normally only dream about. They got a really finely balanced side playing superb football and there was no catching them. It will be quite something if they can do it again."

Wenger laughed off the fact that his side are now third favourites for the title, the odds having been cut from 6-1 to 9-2 by William Hill, but he did admit that Arsenal are getting closer to the form that would force them to be considered. "In the last four or five weeks we have not been good enough or sharp enough for that sort of talk," he said, "but mathematically we are not far away now." Christmas is coming and the Gunners are looking lean again.



High and mighty: from left, Babayaro, Leboeuf, Ferrer, Poyet, Morris, and Flo celebrate Chelsea's ascent

Match report, page 25
Chelsea go top, page 24

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Matt Dickinson watches former England captain make his managerial debut in Italy Platt starts fight against retrucessione

As the Italian glamour was washed away by the afternoon rain yesterday and the nervous exhilaration with it, David Platt was left to contemplate the reality of what he has let himself in for by becoming a 32-year-old football manager.

Not that Platt looked like a man who would be picking up ulcers yesterday as he began the fight against the drop with his Sampdoria side. If the premise stands that football managers, like generals, must primarily be lucky, the former England captain already appears assured of a long and prosperous career.

Had it not been for the fact that Oliver Bierhoff and George Weah's finishing owed more to Mansfield than AC Milan, his managerial debut would have been notable principally for a six-goal thrashing. Instead, his team were turning cartwheels at twice coming from behind to snatch a 2-2 draw, and they go into the Serie A break, which lasts until January 6, with a slender buffer from the relegation zone.

At least the interval should give Platt's employers the opportunity to resolve the lingering row over his coaching status, which turned from controversy into farce yesterday. With more intrigue and secrecy than can be found in a parliamentary lobby, Platt had to scuttle into a dank underground car park to conduct "secret" press conferences about the game.

The intention was not to anger the Italian football federation, who continue to insist that he should not be allowed to take charge because of his lack of coaching qualifications, but the presence is a thin one. Platt gave both pre-match and half-time team talks, and while he sat in the directors' box rather than the dug-out, he was relaying instructions via an intermediary, who was clapping a walkie-talkie. Given the lack of crowd fervour until the finale, they might as well have shouted to the bench.

Enrico Mantovani, the club president, expects some form of compromise with the Italian authorities this week, based on Platt continuing his fast-track studies for Uefa badges,



Face in the crowd: Platt watches impassively from the directors' box as his struggling Sampdoria team come back to claim an unlikely 2-2 draw against AC Milan. Photograph: Empics

but he also repeated that the club would be prepared to take the matter to the European courts.

From the cab drivers to those on the terraces, the locals are certainly happy at the appointment of a former player as manager. Given the warmth of their welcome, it was a surprise yesterday that Platt chose not to make a grand pre-match entrance on the pitch. Quite the opposite, in fact, as he scurried to his seat through the underground tunnel that runs beneath the halfway line from one side of the ground to the other. It was

'You go to bed nice and happy, then your captain has a bad night with his stomach and has to drop out'

a low-key approach that he maintained all afternoon, remaining impassive in his seat even when Arrie Ortega's brilliant free kick sparked wild celebrations five minutes from time. A quick punch of the air and Platt was back feverishly scribbling notes, as he did all afternoon.

His meticulous approach was already well known in Genoa where, as a player four years earlier, he sought not only to learn fluent Italian, but also the local dialect. A bit like Ruud Gullit talking about "garrinin' doon the Toon".

Platt is already learning, though, that in management, the best-laid plans are easily thrown into chaos. "You go to bed nice and happy, as I did on Saturday night," he said,

"thinking you have got everything worked out from your tactics to your team talk. Then your captain, Mannini, has a bad night with his stomach and has to drop out. You suddenly lose your most experienced player. With him it might have been easier to lift the players when they fell behind, but they still fought back well. I could

not ask more of them. I still don't know what talent I have available here, but at least they got the crowd bubbling by the end." Sampdoria's failure to win any of the last six games was shown in a chronic lack of confidence. They should have been swept aside once Leonardo opened the scoring, but Palmieri equalised against

Simon Barnes, page 27

Kelly in no doubt he acted in good faith

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

GRAHAM KELLY yesterday stood by the actions that led to him resigning as the chief executive of the Football Association. Kelly left his post last week after criticism of a decision to grant the FA Football Association of Wales (FAW) a £3.2 million loan in return for its support in the attempt, by Keith Wiseman, the FA chairman, to become a vice-president of Fifa, the world governing body.

Kelly, dismissing claims that the affair has damaged England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup, said: "What I was doing was in the best interests of English football. I went into it with the very good intentions of trying to seek England's position in world football generally, and in connection with the 2006 World Cup campaign."

Kelly was adamant that the grant did not constitute a bribe. "A bribe to me is somebody slipping something into somebody's back pocket and then they stash it in the Bahamas," he said.

He also denied reports that the actual figure promised to the FAW was £6 million and not £3.2 million. "There was already an agreement with Wales, among other countries, to make certain payments under certain agreements and this has been lumped



Kelly: admits no wrong

on to the £3.2 million," he said.

Kelly, though, admitted that perhaps he should have kept the other FA members better informed about the grant. "With hindsight, it would have been better to come up front with it much more quickly than we did," he said.

Wiseman refused to follow Kelly in resigning, even though the executive committee passed a unanimous vote of no-confidence in him. Wiseman claims it is up to the full FA council to decide his fate when they meet on January 4.

Kelly told BBC Radio Five Live: "His prospects are being painted fairly bleakly, but then they would be because the climate at the moment is let's move on quickly and put all this unpleasantness behind us. If the council take that line and back the executive committee, then Keith has very little chance of staying on as chairman. His position remains fundamentally weakened."

TOP TELEVISION VIEWING FIGURES 1998

(First figure is average for programme, second figure is peak)

Sport	Date	Event	Channel	Peak	Average
1. Football	Jun 30	World Cup	ITV	28m	23.8m
2. Football	Jun 22	World Cup	ITV	21.7m	19.5m
3. Football	Jun 26	World Cup	BBC1	20.5m	19.0m
4. Football	Jul 12	World Cup	BBC1	16.3m	15.6m
5. Football	Jun 23	World Cup	BBC1	15.1m	14.5m
6. Football	Jul 7	World Cup	ITV	17.0m	14.1m
7. Football	Jul 6	World Cup	BBC1	15.3m	13.5m
8. Football	Jun 10	World Cup	BBC1	14.1m	11.8m
9. Racing	Apr 4	Grand National	BBC1	11.4m	11.4m
10. Football	Jun 15	World Cup	BBC1	11.9m	11.3m

TOP TEN OF SPORTS OTHER THAN FOOTBALL

Sport	Date	Event	Channel	Peak	Average
1. Racing	Apr 4	Grand National	BBC1	11.4m	11.4m
2. Athletics	Aug 23	Euro. champs.	BBC1	9m	7.9m
3. Motor-racing	Jun 7	Canadian GP	ITV	11.8m	7.2m
4. Tennis	Jul 3	Wimbledon 1/1	BBC1	8.8m	6.4m
5. Athletics	Aug 22	Euro. champs.	ITV	7.4m	6.2m
6. Motor-racing	Apr 12	Argentinian GP	ITV	7.9m	6.1m
7. Motor-racing	Jul 12	British GP	ITV	7.3m	6.0m
8. Motor-racing	Mar 29	Brazilian GP	BBC1	7.1m	6.0m
9. Tennis	Jul 5	Wimbledon final	BBC1	7.1m	6.0m
10. Golf	Jul 19	Open golf (last three hours of play)	BBC2	7.0m	6.0m

World Cup dominates sporting year for armchair supporters

Never has one sports event so dominated the annual television ratings battle as the World Cup did in 1998. The booming popularity of football can be shown by the fact that of the top 30 viewing figures in Britain this year, 29 of them came in the national game, with the only exception being the Grand National, which lasted for about ten minutes in April.

Top spot went to the game between England and Argentina in June, which had an average of 23.8 million and a peak of 26 million (when the penalty shoot-out was being staged), a record for a single-channel sports audience.

However, the highest-ever British figures remain an average of 25.2 million for the 1990 World Cup semi-final between England and West Germany.

John Goodbody discovers that football was in a league of its own with TV viewers in 1998. This game was shown by both BBC television and ITV. Mike Miller, the new Controller of BBC Sport, said: "There are no signs of the interest in football abating. The game reaches outside the sports community. In any case, what is going to replace it? There are no signs that any other sport is poised to take over."

Whitehead thwarted by naivety

NOTE the name Adam Whitehead. Few could doubt that he is the next on the list that reads Wilkie, Moorhouse and Gillingham, despite learning a lesson in self-control on the way to missing his world record target at the national winter championships in Glasgow yesterday.

In a courageous effort, that left him still in possession of the national 200 metres breaststroke title, Whitehead, 18, swam too far inside world-record pace for his own good in a triumph of heart over head. "I can't fault his bravery, but next time he needs to be a lot more self-disciplined," Nick Sellwood, the Coventry coach, said, after watching his pupil make victory in 2min 10.03sec, 2.24sec shy of the world mark established by the Russian, Andrei Korniev, earlier this year.

Having clocked 2min 8.54sec to win the European short-course title in Sheffield only a week ago, Whitehead had wanted to seize his opportunity to become the youngest

British man to hold a world swimming record. The excitement of that prospect saw him throw sense to the wind, however, as he shot off the blocks. His split time, after two lengths, was 28.62sec against his own 29.9sec, timed in Sheffield, and Korniev's 28.98sec. By halfway, Whitehead was still flowing, his stroke sleek and powerful, his time 1min and 5.94sec, a second faster than a week ago and inside the Russian's 1min 1.25min. Out of the turn, the teenager started to pay the price; his stroke shortened to the extent that he was taking 11 strokes to the length as opposed to eight at the start of the race and the target steadily eroded. By 150 metres, the game was up.

Local hope first to reach final

ALAN JONES, a lecturer in computer science at Teesside Tertiary College, was the first to reach the final of the Metro-mail International Masters in Stockton-on-Tees yesterday, when he beat another local hope, Stan Crowe, 15-4, in the semi-finals (David Rhys Jones writes).

Jones had beaten John Price, from Wales, 15-12, in his qualifying group, while Crowe had accounted for Mark McMahon, 15-3, and David Bryant, 14-10. In the other semi-final, Gary Smith showed he is still a force to be reckoned with by defeating David Gourlay, the Bupa Open champion from Scotland, 15-14.

McManus stems flood

POSITIVE shot selection prevailed over measured, percentage play as Mark Williams established a commanding 6-2 lead over Alan McManus in a surprisingly one-sided opening session to the final of the Irish Open at the National Basketball Arena, Dublin, yesterday.

Although Williams performed solidly to defeat John Parrott 6-1 in the semi-finals on Saturday, thereby reversing the outcome of their meeting in the final of the German Masters, it was McManus who caught the eye with breaks of 66, 91, 120 and 94 during a 6-3 victory over Tony Drago.

SWIMMING: LACK OF SELF-DISCIPLINE FLOORS WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT

BOWLS

SNOOKER

Deflat

Tim

THEY left Adelaide of helpless purgator, something there in them. Newspaper sneered. Test match dominated the air: screens and televisk as probed mercilessly in Canberra. cricketers are findir to walk tall in a co seeks only to mock. The futility of ano tive Ashes mission on their faces anc silent introspection days customarily b banter, but now, t and ambitions con: was not even a gallows humour. TI from being good e let nobody say the do not care enough. In transit in b they saw the most y of the front pages. newspaper, above graph of Australia: tions, sat the heat

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JOHN WOOL



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FA Carling Premiership: Resilience and consistency of leaders prove elusive for Ferguson's team

Chelsea work their way to the summit

BUSINESS was brisk at the Chelsea megastore on Saturday evening. There were a few shoppers buying Christmas presents certainly, but the supporters were there because they wanted to buy themselves a memento of the day that they saw Chelsea go to the top of the table for the first time in nine years. Judging by the way they loitered over the more expensive items, the feeling is that Chelsea will stay on top until it really counts.

The neutral view, as summed up on Match of the Day, was that this was far from a classic match and Chelsea were far from their best. Yet it was the kind of game that attaches enormous, garish neon lights to the claim that this could be Chelsea's season.

For a start, it was one of Tottenham Hotspur's more robust displays. They made life difficult for the home side and threatened real damage on a couple of brisk counter-attacks. Combined with their improved accuracy at set-pieces, this was an afternoon on which Chelsea's concentration had to be at its sharpest.

Chelsea had the discipline to keep it at 0-0, but only real championship material could have secured victory. For all the gloss and glamour associated with Chelsea, it was good old elbow grease that finally gave them the three points. As Tore Andre Flo, the scorer of the second goal in the dying seconds, summed it up: "We are fit and we can fight much better."

Chelsea have benefited from the techniques of a new fitness coach, Antonio Pinus, and from the firm belief of Gianluca Vialli in the necessity of rotation. Swapping players in and out of the starting line-up keeps them fresh. It is that simple and perhaps too many

Scoreboard: Chelsea 2, Tottenham Hotspur 0. by Alyson Rudd

have been too slow to acknowledge the fact. It seems to have given Chelsea a head start on the other main contenders for it is a philosophy they now practise at Old Trafford, but one that they are not yet quite comfortable with. Of course, players such as Flo or Jody Morris will say they want more first-team football, but they say this because they are asked and because any other answer would sound unambitious. It does not, these days at least, mean that they are on the verge of mutiny.

Vialli himself epitomised the fact that Chelsea players can give everything for just one game, safe in the knowledge they can rest for a while. It will be surprising if Vialli plays another full 90 minutes before the new year. It took him an hour and a half to recover sufficiently to face the press and even then he looked exhausted.

If a team can be as fit in the last ten minutes as they were in the first, mistakes are kept to a minimum. Vialli stressed that when Chris Armstrong was sent off in the 61st minute the upshot could have been that Chelsea lost their shape and hurried themselves forward. Other managers might have been tempted to bring on an extra striker, but "I wanted us to keep our shape

so three strikers would have been wrong". It is so often a feature of the English game that the final minutes of a match, and in particular of a derby match such as this, are characterised by the headless chicken routine of the heart ruling the head. Chelsea, not yet tired enough to misplace their thinking caps, persevered and a neat pass from Vialli set up Gustavo Poyet for the first goal.

Poyet is remarkable. He looks like and is touted as a hard man, the player to shore up the more delicate talent of Zola, yet he is as perceptive as any in the team — "one of the most clever players I have seen in my career," according to Vialli. "He's the complete midfielder." He is also now Chelsea's leading scorer.

An even better illustration of the team's resilience was provided by the second goal. Yet another throwed through ball from Leboeuf was played into the path of Petrescu. It was slightly overhit and at that stage of the match a less-fit player might have given it up, but Petrescu persevered, kept the ball in play and had the mental freshness to deliver the perfect cross for Flo.

"They've got the talent here, they've had the talent for the past couple seasons, but this year they seem to have the consistency," George Graham, the Tottenham manager, said. Consistency is born of fitness and commitment and desire. Perhaps that is what makes football so fascinating as we approach a new century. It is no longer a game with local flavour — players arrive from all over the globe and yet feel part of a club with its own set of traditions. It does not always work, as Middlesbrough found to their cost with Ravanelli, Emerson and Juninho, but at Chelsea, where perhaps there ought to be a mercenary air, there is a real, palpable team spirit.

United have not won any of their past six matches. In accounting for Middlesbrough's first victory at Old Trafford since 1930, it is impossible to prise apart the visitors' strengths and their opponents' weaknesses. They were bolted together. The fitness of Ricard and the power of Deane had been fastened to a United defence that was uncertain of mind and sometimes feeble in body. Middlesbrough, now unbeaten in 11 matches, were urgent in midfield and, until a



Vialli, left, the Chelsea player-manager, prepares to receive the ball by holding off the attentions of Young, the Tottenham Hotspur defender.

United are laid bare by defensive flaws

AT noon today, Bernie Slaven is to keep a promise that will lose him his modesty. The former Middlesbrough player, now a radio pundit, had given his word that he would bare his buttocks if his old team won at Old Trafford and will do so in a store in the town. It must comfort Slaven to realise that his exposure will not be as indecent as that of the Manchester United defence on Saturday.

Supporters hardly knew where to look when faced with a back four that had been left naked, as Hamilton Ricard and Brian Deane, the Middlesbrough forwards, stripped it of confidence. Many others were as guilty as Slaven in allowing the mystique of United to count for more than the facts. After this defeat, the misapprehension is at an end. United have not won any of their past six matches. In accounting for Middlesbrough's first victory at Old Trafford since 1930, it is impossible to prise apart the visitors' strengths and their opponents' weaknesses. They were bolted together. The fitness of Ricard and the power of Deane had been fastened to a United defence that was uncertain of mind and sometimes feeble in body. Middlesbrough, now unbeaten in 11 matches, were urgent in midfield and, until a

late onslaught, resilient at centre back, where Gary Pallister, returning to his previous club, relished the combat. Bryan Robson's team were 3-0 ahead within the hour. After 23 minutes, Deane chased a low cross from Dean Gordon and tucked it back for Ricard to finish. In the 31st minute, a free kick from Andy Townsend was partially cleared and swept into the net by Gordon's excellent drive from 20 yards. With 14 minutes of the second half gone, Ricard freed Deane to extend the lead. Such descriptions, while accurate, are so incomplete as to be skewed testimony. From their vantage point, United saw a string of errors rather than a trio of goals.

At the first, Gary Neville pulled away from Gordon's cross, perhaps expecting Peter Schmeichel to intercept as the ball passed through his six-yard box. For the second, Ronny Johnsen, hampered by the bullying presence of Deane, nodded gently into the path of Gordon. The final Middlesbrough

Scoreboard: Manchester United 2, Middlesbrough 3. by Kevin McCarr

goal began with a misplaced pass from Johnsen to Ricard and ended with Schmeichel failing to block a shot from Deane that was close to him. The United defence has already been breached 23 times in the FA Carling Premiership, just three short of the total conceded in the whole of last season. Even a derided Liverpool have a better record. Although Jaap Stam was absent with an ankle injury on Saturday, it would be absurd for United to argue that they cannot cope with the loss of one man. Alex Ferguson, the United

manager, was not at the game because of a family bereavement and Jim Ryan, his assistant at present, was left to admit the egg-shell fragility. "The defence is a problem we have to address, though perhaps it is not a big job as it is made out," he said. To outsiders, the task appears large and emotionally harrowing. Schmeichel is infecting the players in front of him with his tentativeness and, much as United would wish to allow a great servant to remain in place until his departure in the summer, the club's ambitions are too large for sentimentality. The defence, in general, is mismatched. Gary Neville, in the middle of the back four, was overwhelmed. Johnsen, adept at mopping up, is unconvincing when asked to make the initial challenge. All the same, one should not draw a trite and unfavourable comparison with Pallister. Mighty though his performance was, the game suited the veteran since it asked him to stay deep and guard a

piece of territory. It is not United's decision to sell Pallister, 33, that is in question, so much as the arrangements made to replace him.

The Old Trafford side, having played with sluggish impression for an hour, almost redeemed themselves. Beckham crossed for Butt to head home. Then, a rippling move by Roy Keane, Paul Scholes, the substitute, and Butt saw Cole halted before Scholes tucked in a loose ball for the second goal. There were 20 minutes left, but the decision to replace Beckham had diminished the variety of the service and the equaliser did not quite arrive.

After 58 minutes, Pallister was caught in possession and only a save by Mark Schwarzer stopped Cole from scoring. In that incident lay the particle of good fortune in a result that Robson, the former United captain, sees as his best as a manager. Middlesbrough return for an FA Cup tie on January 3 and, as long as United display such structural flaws, all visitors to Old Trafford will feel that they may just be in luck. MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-2): P Schmeichel — P Neville (sub: O G Solskjaer, Poyet), G Beardsley, G Pallister, G Butt, R Gigg — A Cole, E Shearman. MIDDLESBROUGH (3-5-2): M Schwarzer — G Gordon (sub: M Black, G Foster, R Meehan), M Moore, T M Gordon (sub: M Black, G), A Townsend, D Gordon — H Speed, B Deane. Referee: G Poll.

Worrying lack of passion leaves Liverpool in limbo

THE most accurate encapsulation of a rare Liverpool triumph came from the one man whose attempts to haul the match from its mediocrity went unaided. "It was efficient," Jamie Redknapp said. "That's what we need right now."

Limited ambition underpins work at Anfield these days and, therefore, although they succeeded in ending the club's worst sequence for 44 years, there was still no evidence to disprove the theory that this is the worst Liverpool team for decades. Even the source of much satisfaction, their second clean sheet in 12 games, cannot be relied upon as some sort of barometer for a brighter future. The diligent efforts of Benito Carbone apart, Sheffield Wednesday belied the kind of endeavour and threat that had recently injected some hope into their FA Carling Premiership season.

What could be construed as more worrying for Liverpool is that events surrounding the actual football provided more of a focus for what remains a loyal crowd. Supporters' groups dedicated the moments before kick-off to the memory of the 96 people who lost their lives in the tragedy at Hillsborough, the home of Wednesday. The Kop rose in unison, reminding officials of the visiting club of their desire to see a permanent memorial erected at the ground.

If that was an emotional and necessary interlude, another kind of emotional outpouring from the fans after the final whistle showed how low the club has sunk. The biggest cheers were reserved for announcements of defeats elsewhere for Manchester United and Everton. One fan said: "I know we can't catch Man U, but as long as we finish above Everton, that's all that matters."

It will be a disaster if they do not manage that. Indeed, if they finish below their Merseyside rivals, they

Scoreboard: Liverpool 2, Sheffield Wednesday 0. by Stephen Wood

could well be playing in the Nationwide League first division next season. Of course, Liverpool have too many talented individuals to suffer such a fate, but before a 15-minute period of pressure proved enough to break their opponents' resistance on Saturday, they were alarmingly close to the relegation area.

The unease was evident in the body language of Gerard Houllier, the manager, midway through the second period. Liverpool, ahead through goals from Berger after 18 minutes and Owen 15 minutes later, had relaxed a little and Houllier, sensing the danger of a

Houllier: seeking improvement

Wednesday revival, was off the bench, clenching his fist at the players. Redknapp, whose passing and awareness was delightful all afternoon, took the hint and, a couple of attacks later, the home side had reassured themselves. "The more we show signs of strength and stability, the better we feel," Houllier said. "We are not there yet, though. I know what went wrong in the second half, and now we must find a way of playing for the whole match."

There does not, though, appear to be much love left in South Yorkshire for Paolo Di Canio, the Wednesday striker who has not returned for training with his club. Suspended until their Premiership encounter with Leicester City on Boxing Day, for pushing over Paul Alocock, the referee, in September, Di Canio spent the weekend in his home town near Rome. Danny Wilson, the Wednesday manager, said: "The chances of him playing next week are slim and, apart from physically dragging him back, what can I do? The sooner he tells us whether he wants to play for Sheffield Wednesday, the better."

Moreover, Carbone, Di Canio's fellow countryman, is missing his absent friend's ability on the field. On Saturday, you had to sympathise with Carbone, who was let down by his team-mates. Moments after Owen had struck for Liverpool's second, he looked like a broken man, and Wednesday will have to work hard to prevent him from falling into Di Canio's trap of disillusionment.

LIVERPOOL (3-5-2): D James — J Carragher, S Staunton, P Babo — V Hoggan (sub: B T Kvarnemo, S Davis), J Hoggan, P Jones, P Berger, S Byrne — M Charney, sub: K Healy, 60, R Fowler. SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (4-4-2): P Strick — P Albright, D Walker, E Thomas, A Hinchcliffe — N Alexander (sub: L Briscoe, 60), D Sennar, W Jork, P Pugh (sub: R Humphreys, 86) — A Booth, 8. Referee: A White.

Charlton Athletic v Aston Villa

NOT for the first time, Hassan Kachoul clutched the man-of-the-match champagne at The Dell. He had done so after his full debut for Southampton in the 1-0 defeat by Derby County three weeks previously and he did so again after the 3-1 victory against Wimbledon on Saturday. It was an incongruous sight.

Kachoul, 25, is a Muslim, not devout but enough to make the partaking of alcohol a taboo practice. "I believe in Allah but I don't pray as often as I should," he said. "It is sometimes difficult in this profession. I don't eat pork and I don't drink but I shall pass the champagne on to some friends. I'm sure they'll enjoy it."

Among the Belarussian, Chinese, French, Belgian, Dutch, Hungarian and Chilean trialists who have passed or are passing through the Southampton training ground this season, the loose-limbed Moroccan has made the greatest impact. He never hit it off at St Etienne, bought himself out of his contract with Metz and landed in Hampshire. "I'm thoroughly enjoying being here," he said. "It's not as cold as everyone told me it would be. The game is very physical, but that is not a problem. We are at the bottom, but the mood is good. I never got a chance in France. I knew I could do better; I just needed that chance and now I've got it."

Kachoul is not the most elegant import to have graced these shores. His control can be suspect, his awareness questionable. Yet he plays with a coltish freedom, an almost naive vitality, that makes him nigh-on impossible to predict. Wimbledon, buoyed by recent wins over Arsenal, Coventry City and Liverpool, can cope with most opponents, rough or smooth, but had no answer to Kachoul's rangy running. Nor could they handle

Dash of Moroccan spice refreshes Southampton

Scoreboard: Charlton Athletic 1, Aston Villa 3. Tonight, 8.0pm

per for another two months, they know that Paul Merson is still struggling with a back injury. And all the time, the rest are missing behind them. For so long the clear leaders at the top of the FA Carling Premiership, Villa are in danger of being sucked back into the pack. That is not to say that the game is up for them, of course. They have already stayed the course for longer than most people expected and a point against Charlton Athletic at The Valley tonight will be enough to take them back above Chelsea and ensure that they spend Christmas at No 1. They are more than capable of achieving that, especially as Charlton are experiencing an altogether more unwelcome form of pressure. After their own impressive start to the season, they have won only one of their past eight games. It is as important a game for them tonight as it is for Villa.

CHARLTON ATHLETIC (probable): 4-4-2: S Be — D Mils, R Flus, E Youst, C Powell — C Mendonca, A Hart. ASTON VILLA (probable): 3-5-2: M Oakes — U Eboroz, G Southgate, G Barry — S Watson, L Hendrie, I Taylor, A Thompson, A Wright — D Dublin, J Joseph. Referee: S Dunn. TELEVISION: Live on Sky Sports, from 7pm. PREDICTION: Villa to win.

Scoreboard: Southampton 3, Wimbledon 1. by Russell Kernpson

James Beattie, 20, a £1 million acquisition from Blackburn Rovers last summer. Beattie is from the old school of centre forwards — long legs, flying elbows, sticking the head in where it hurts. Not dirty, never endangering the good looks of his markers. Simply hard but fair. "He's very, very enthusiastic," David Jones, the Southampton manager, said. "He's always coming back for extra training to improve his positional play and it's a pleasure to work with him. He always wants to learn. He terrorised Wimbledon, they didn't really know what to do with him."

Perry and Blackwell, the Wimbledon central defenders, will not have endured such a torrid afternoon for ages. They were given little or no assistance by their colleagues, who frequently appeared to be dwelling on penalties rather than pressing day in and day out. Southampton ended with an ill-disciplined failure. The dressing-room debriefing by Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager, might not have appealed to the faint of heart but it would have made for fascinating listening. Only Sullivan, the resilient goalkeeper, could have expected to escape the tirade.

Sullivan twice denied Kachoul early on but was powerless to prevent Southampton going ahead in the eleventh minute. Beattie kicked on and Ostenstad rounded Sullivan before guiding his shot into the empty net. Sullivan also palmed a shot from Beattie into the base of his near post — the first of four occasions on which Southampton struck woodwork. Kachoul drove forward to head in Le Tissier's exquisite half-volleyed cross in the 65th minute and, three minutes later, Ostenstad crashed in the third. Rarely can Wimbledon have competed so ineffectively and they barely deserved Gayle's consolation goal, astutely finished though it was. Southampton thus rose from last place in the FA Carling Premiership to nineteenth and Jones will consider extending Kachoul's contract, which is due to expire at the end of the season. "He's worked hard and it's clear he can play," Jones said. "Kachoul will think to that... or maybe not."

SOUTHAMPTON (4-4-2): P Jones — G Gayle, G Beattie, G Blackwell, G Sullivan — M Le Tissier, D Easton, D Easton, D Easton — G Foster, R Meehan, T M Gordon (sub: M Black, G), A Townsend, D Gordon — H Speed, B Deane. Referee: G Poll.

WIMBLEDON (4-4-2): P Jones — G Gayle, G Beattie, G Blackwell, G Sullivan — M Le Tissier, D Easton, D Easton, D Easton — G Foster, R Meehan, T M Gordon (sub: M Black, G), A Townsend, D Gordon — H Speed, B Deane. Referee: G Poll.

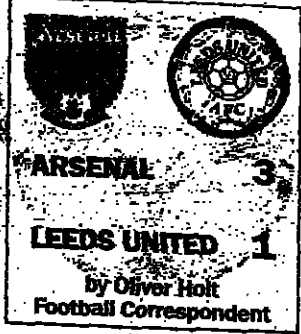
Kachoul: dynamic influence

WIMBLEDON (4-4-2): P Jones — G Gayle, G Beattie, G Blackwell, G Sullivan — M Le Tissier, D Easton, D Easton, D Easton — G Foster, R Meehan, T M Gordon (sub: M Black, G), A Townsend, D Gordon — H Speed, B Deane. Referee: G Poll.

WIMBLEDON (4-4-2): P Jones — G Gayle, G Beattie, G Blackwell, G Sullivan — M Le Tissier, D Easton, D Easton, D Easton — G Foster, R Meehan, T M Gordon (sub: M Black, G), A Townsend, D Gordon — H Speed, B Deane. Referee: G Poll.

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FA Carling Premiership: Dutchman plays key role as ten-man Arsenal triumph Leeds are undone by Bergkamp



Bergkamp opens the scoring for Arsenal against Leeds United at Highbury yesterday. He also played a part in his team's other two goals. Photograph: Marc Aspland

THE homecoming was not quite what David O'Leary had hoped for but at least it proved his point. His squad, as he has kept saying, is not big enough or good enough to give Leeds United a realistic chance of winning the FA Carling Premiership title. At Highbury, yesterday, he was prevented from playing what he referred to wistfully as his "Full Monty XI" and Arsenal, despite being reduced to ten men for the final minutes, seized their chance.

Without Lucas Radebe and David Batty, Leeds were good, but not quite good enough. The form team of the Premiership with five wins from their past six games before yesterday, the team that has been playing some of the most attractive football in the division, they did not have replacements good enough to ensure that their absences were not missed.

They still produced some brilliant incisive football as they chased a victory that would have moved them up to third place in the table. Lee Bowyer, a player Arsène Wenger described as "a specialist at upsetting people", was tireless in midfield and Harry Kewell was a constant source of innovation in attack. Without Radebe, though, they were vulnerable to the attacking incursions of Arsenal. They failed conspicuously to stifle the threat posed by the deep-lying Dennis Bergkamp, who was involved in all three goals. Without Batty, Hopkin did not have quite the same freedom to get forward and their ability to strike back suffered as a result.

"I was proud of them in

many ways," O'Leary, who made a record 722 appearances for Arsenal, said. "I cannot afford to lose players like Batty and Radebe but I would have loved to have come here with my real team, a team that was the Full Monty. I think we could have made it a good test for them."

Despite the 3-1 scoreline, they still made a good fist of it. The turning point came when they missed their first chance, an opportunity which fell, ironically, to Hopkin, at the end of the first incisive move of the match in the twentieth minute.

Bergkamp, wasting possession for once, played a careless

pass that Hopkin cut out midway inside his own half and Leeds set off on a lightning counter-attack. Hopkin played the ball to Bowyer, Bowyer slid it quickly out to Hasselbaink on the left and the Dutchman rolled it across goal into the path of Hopkin who was left with only Manning to beat, but he pushed his shot wide of the left-hand post from six yards out.

Eight minutes later, Arsenal made him pay for his profligacy as they rode their luck and opened the scoring. Petit played a lofted ball to Anelka, who was offside when he nodded the ball on to Bergkamp,

but, the Dutch forward was allowed to continue. Bergkamp, as usual, went for the stylish finish, trying to curl his shot round Martyn, but he mis-kicked it and it crept in at the near post instead.

Anelka should have put Arsenal further ahead four minutes after that when Overmars skipped past Halle for the umpteenth time on the left-hand side and pulled the ball back to the Frenchman. Anelka, too, went for guile rather than power but his side-footed shot from ten yards was too close to Martyn.

Petit went close ten minutes before half-time when he

timed his run perfectly to meet Bergkamp's chip, but his flick over Martyn sailed just over the crossbar. After the interval, though, Bergkamp's promptings were more fruitful. A simple pass found Vieira on the edge of the area and he evaded the challenge of Woodgate and drove his left-foot shot across Martyn and into the corner of the net.

It seemed then that Arsenal had put the game beyond doubt but Kewell and Bowyer, in particular, never gave up. One Kewell pass to Hasselbaink in the sixtieth minute might have led to a goal were it not for a superbly timed

intervention from Boud, but six minutes later the Dutch forward dragged Leeds back into the game. He started the move himself, playing a short pass to Bowyer midway inside the Arsenal half. Bowyer lofted a ball into the Arsenal box for Kewell to chase and when it bounced off Kewell's heel and ran to the edge of the area, Hasselbaink met it with a low and venomous strike. It was Hasselbaink's seventh goal in as many games.

Petit finally put the game beyond the reach of the visitors seven minutes from the end. Bergkamp was the provider again, sliding his pass

between two defenders for Petit to slip it past Martyn.

Arsenal's celebrations were tainted when Gilles Grimandi, a substitute, was sent off three minutes later for what appeared to be a butt on Alan Smith. Paul Durkin, the referee, did not hesitate to send off the Frenchman, making it five dismissals for Arsenal this season.

ARSENAL (4-2-2): A. Manninger - L. Dixon, S. Boud, M. Keown, N. West - F. Ljungberg (sub), G. Grenville, P. Petit, P. Petit, M. Overmars (sub), C. West, 87 - N. Anelka, D. Bergkamp. LEEDS UNITED (3-2-2): M. Martyn - J. Woodgate, A. Husted, R. Mckenzie (sub), D. Wetherall, 45 - G. Heale, L. Bowyer, D. Hopkin, D. Granville (sub), A. Smith, 81, 1 star - J. Hasselbaink, H. Kewell. Referee: P. Durkin.

Coventry look forward to the return of lady luck

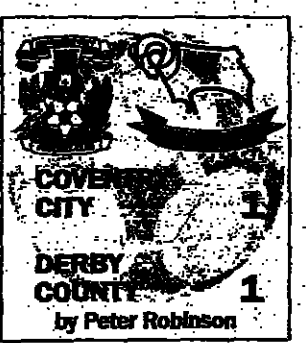
CAR-PARK attendants, waiters, maths teachers - you do not upset these people. Receptionists, council planning officers, British Rail ticket inspectors - you remain at all times unerringly polite. You cross them at your peril.

Think about it. Have you tried passing through French customs after indulging in a trade about bureaucracy, foreigners and how Britain bailed them out in two world wars? You would still be there. Have you insulted your local barman as loudly as possible? Been served yet? You simply do not do it.

It is a fact of life, one of those rules that most of the time you take for granted but are occasionally reminded of, as, indeed, a few thousand were at Coventry City on Saturday, where there was the distinct impression that somebody had been whingeing about referees too much lately.

Gordon Strachan, perhaps. His criticisms of whistle-blowers and card-wavers have become a tradition. Probably justified most of them, too, but their sheer number and vehemence must have made an impression on their subjects by now, they must have noticed - everybody else has - and it would be human nature to be a bit peeved.

Certainly, you could not help thinking that at Highfield



Road, as the penalty appeals came and went and as the Coventry crowd, players and Strachan, their manager, grew steadily more frustrated. One penalty ignored, acceptable two, yes, as long as they were borderline; but six?

No criticism of Uriah Rennie, the referee, he is reportedly a terribly nice chap and most of the claims were non-starters, but players on both sides agreed that a couple might have been awarded. Not for the first time this season, Coventry felt that justice had not been done.

They should have won, no question. Derby were rotten in the first half and Coventry dominated as they might in their dreams. Yet they scored but once. McAlister surprising Carbonari with a terrific tackle. Froggatt picking up the loose ball and when Poom, the Derby goalkeeper, failed to

hold his shot, Whelan was there to score from a yard. There could have been more, but chances came and went.

Derby switched things around during the interval, but had defending given them their equaliser, Carsley squeezing the ball in from close range. Coventry set off in search of a winner, but it would not come.

Three times in the final five minutes they claimed they had been denied by foul means, and three times they were ignored, notably when Carbonari wrestled with Huckerby, who, decently, failed to fall over. When Hunt handled under pressure from Breen the free kick was awarded to Derby. It was one of those days.

Even Strachan admitted that he was starting to get fed up with talking about referees, presumably because he was running out of things to say. He can content himself with the thought that if luck evens itself out over the course of the season, Coventry will benefit from a few dodgy decisions too.

COVENTRY CITY (4-2-2): M. Hartman - R. Mckenzie, R. Shaw, P. Williams, M. Edwards (sub), G. Breen, Grant - P. Little (sub), G. Bowyer, 84, G. McMillan (sub), J. Alcock, 88, T. E. Bennett, S. Froggatt - N. Whelan, D. Huckerby. DERBY COUNTY (3-4-3): M. Poom - S. Price, H. Carbonari, J. Landon - R. Deila, I. Roberts, D. Powell, A. Carbonari (sub), 1 star, 88 - D. Sturridge (sub), L. Carsley, 45, P. Whorwood, K. Hopper (sub), S. Elliott, 49. Referee: U. Rennie.

Gullit to wrap up Ba deal

RUUD GULLIT will embark on a significant pre-Christmas spending spree this week, when Didier Drogba, the Paris Saint-Germain defender, arrives at St James' Park along with Ibrahim Ba, of AC Milan, (George Caulkin writes).

Newcastle United, whose French contingent will rise to four, will pay in the region of £8 million to land the pair. Drogba, 20, is expected on Tyneside within the next few days to discuss personal terms after Newcastle and PSG agreed a fee - understood to be around £2.5 million - for the youth international.

Ba, 25, returned to Italy at the weekend after conducting swift negotiations with Newcastle officials on Friday afternoon. The right-sided midfielder will return to the North East after settling his affairs with his Serie A employers and both could make their debuts at home to Leeds United on Boxing Day.

Detectives are investigating a nightclub incident that left Matthew Le Tissier, the Southampton midfielder, with a minor head injury. Several people are believed to have been involved in the incident at the Chicago Rock nightclub in Southampton in the early hours of yesterday. No arrests were made.

Fairy tale still awaiting traditional outcome

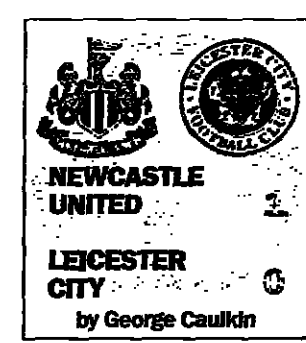
THIS is a story about a Cinderella for our times, whose days were spent scraping the bottom of barrels until a dashing knight, by the name of Sir John, swept her off her feet, promising wealth and happiness. "Newcastle United, you shall go to the ball," he said. And what a couple they made.

Handsome and daring, how they pranced with abandon after gategrashing the FA Carling Premiership party. How they wowed the adoring crowd.

It seemed as if their dance would last forever, until the chimes of midnight sounded and, in a puff of smoke, brave Sir John disappeared. This made our poor Newcastle confused, for this was not how it was meant to be.

A large pair of shoes lay on the deserted dance-floor, but filling them was to prove an onerous chore. Little Douglas tried them on for size. Naughty Freddy took a few painful steps, but they were merely fickle suitors. Those who once flocked around eagerly, now melted away. The Gallowgate home, once such a happy place, full of noise and laughter, fell silent.

That the ugly sisters - Sunderland and Middlesbrough - were beginning to make their way in the world, made the fall from grace even harder to bear.



United's loyal Buttons - otherwise known as Rudi - found this situation most alarming. How could he best help Newcastle when his new master's identity remained a mystery? A rich American? A dapper Japanese? The uncertainty was irritating. He understood why his predecessors, Kevin and Kenny, eventually found the job intolerable.

Fast-forward to the present, for this is very much a work in progress. Sometimes there are good days and sometimes bad, but there is little vim and less vigour. It seems entirely fitting that a giant crane should tower above Cinderella's castle, for there is little doubt that most inside are in need of a lift. All the entertainment offered the guests on Saturday was provided by Warren Barton's dancing feet.

Leicester City did not seem too impressed by this jester. bedecked in black and white, but they could not find among their cast anyone as influential. "We had no energy, we were poor," Martin O'Neill said into his jersey. "Everyone needs a Warren Barton." Rudi said after he had watched his joker card bamboozle Leicester with his peculiar skills, brilliant one moment, base the next.

His deflected pass to Andreas Andersson found its way, through another dollop of good fortune, to Stephen Glass and City found themselves undone. Barton's performance was all the more impressive given an unfortunate disability. "He has no left foot," Rudi revealed.

So Newcastle enters the festive period a little more cheerful than before, although life is lacking the lustre and glamour of those days of such happy memory. She cannot help but look to the past and wonder longingly about those dreams unfulfilled.

It is nearly seven years since Sir John, of the silver tongue, cast his tantalising spell. Yet, where is the happy ending? Newcastle United (4-2-2): S. Glass - I. Croxall, N. Drogba, S. Howie, M. Barton - S. Glass, R. Lee, G. Spence, G. Gorrondona - T. Farnham (sub), A. Shearer, 56, M. Anderson. LEICESTER CITY (4-4-2): K. Keller - F. Sinclair (sub), P. Karmichael, 81, M. Elliott, G. Taylor, P. Hetherington - A. Wright, M. Lutz (sub), R. Savage, 48, N. Lennon, S. Guppy - A. Collins (sub), G. Forster, 66, E. Heskley. Referee: J. Winstanley.



Hartson, the West Ham striker, holds off Bilić.

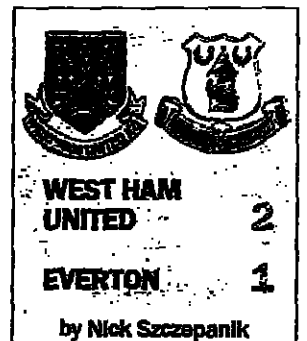
THE FA Carling Premiership table from three weeks ago, showing West Ham United in second place, was still pinned up in the Upton Park press room before Saturday's game. The old order has re-established itself in the interim, and even victory over an Everton team weakened by suspension and illness only pushed West Ham back up as far as sixth at the final whistle.

On Friday, Harry Redknapp, the manager, said that gategrashing the top seven on a permanent basis requires resources which, one suspects, are beyond a club that sells a player for £1.6 million - chicken feed in Premiership terms - in order to satisfy a spending plan, as West Ham did a month or so ago in the case of Andrew Lupsey. How, then, can they satisfy players such as Rio Ferdinand, who distinguished himself once again?

Ferdinand is committed to the West Ham cause, as his reaction at the final whistle demonstrated, but you wonder how long he will be content to settle for lesser rewards at club level than colleagues in the England team in which he seems sure to be a regular. Redknapp has been asked that question every day since Ferdinand's potential emerged, and on Saturday finally admitted that it will be a problem for the club.

Ferdinand highlights the dilemma for West Ham

lan Wright will probably be concentrating on his new career as a chat-show host, and there were signs on Saturday that his sharpness is waning, unless he was saving himself for his return to Highbury on Boxing Day. In a



game full of chances, a result of continual squandering of possession as much as carefully crafted passing from the likes of Eyal Berkovic, Wright missed a handful, although the close attention he received from Marco Materazzi was partly to blame. Materazzi, mobile for a man of his height, was unflappable under pressure, and as strong a contender for the man-of-the-match award as Ferdinand.

cross beyond Myhre four minutes after his error allowed Nick Barmby to provide Danny Cadamarteri with a 71st-minute equaliser.

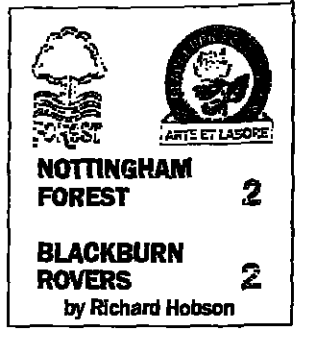
Myhre redeemed his earlier error with saves from Berkovic, Frank Lampard and even Julian Dicks, whose recall may reveal more about West Ham's lack of resources than any player sales, although Shaka Hislop also denied Dacourt twice, and Ward blasted a presentable chance over. "We had to give up a few opportunities in the search for an equaliser," Walter Smith, the Everton manager, said. "Exciting stuff," Redknapp said. "It was vital we bounced back after two defeats." Bouncing back up to second place may prove far more difficult.

WEST HAM UNITED (3-5-2): S. Heskley - J. Wright, J. Hartson - A. Wright, M. Lutz (sub), R. Savage, 48, N. Lennon, S. Guppy - A. Collins (sub), G. Forster, 66, E. Heskley. Referee: J. Winstanley.

WEST HAM UNITED (3-5-2): S. Heskley - J. Wright, J. Hartson - A. Wright, M. Lutz (sub), R. Savage, 48, N. Lennon, S. Guppy - A. Collins (sub), G. Forster, 66, E. Heskley. Referee: J. Winstanley.

WEST HAM UNITED (3-5-2): S. Heskley - J. Wright, J. Hartson - A. Wright, M. Lutz (sub), R. Savage, 48, N. Lennon, S. Guppy - A. Collins (sub), G. Forster, 66, E. Heskley. Referee: J. Winstanley.

Bassett in no mood for joyful sing-song



IT MUST be hoped that the Nottingham Forest supporters enjoyed a pre-match rendition of *O Come All Ye Faithful* provided by the Bestwood Male Voice Choir. With their side bottom of the table for the first time this season, they are unlikely to hear the words "joyful and triumphant" at the City Ground again in the foreseeable future.

The winless run now stands at 15 games and failure to beat Manchester United at Old Trafford on Boxing Day will equal the worst sequence of results by any club - by unhappy coincidence the record is held by Forest themselves - since the Premier League was inaugurated.

They should have taken three points on Saturday for the first time since August, pluckily though Blackburn Rovers recovered in the second half. While Dave Bassett, the Forest manager, has bemoaned ill luck previously, he could make no such excuse this time. Nor, in fairness, did he. Forest were fortunate to be awarded a penalty for a challenge by Henchoz on Johnson, converted by Chettle, and then to survive a worse challenge by Mattsson on Blake in the opposite area.

Had Freedom added to his earlier goal by converting a fine opportunity early after the restart, then Forest would doubtless have proceeded to win in comfort. Instead, just



Blake: late saviour

two minutes later, Blake arrived late to meet a cross from Wilcox and, from then on, the tension and panic within the home ranks made it a matter of time before Blackburn scored again.

Surprisingly, the equaliser did not arrive until two minutes into injury time. Blake volleying in the rebound after Sutton headed a centre by Duff against the bar. Only a fine save by Beasant from point-blank range to deny Sherwood and a poor finish by Wilcox, after the goalkeeper had been caught in possession by Sutton, had denied Blackburn earlier.

Anybody arriving at the final whistle would have thought Blackburn victorious, to judge by the body language. Forest trudged off, heads bowed, while the visitors showed celebratory hugs. "I don't know if one win will tilt the situation for us, but it wouldn't half help," Bassett said.

So would a prompt sale of Van Hoojdonk, who pulled out here because of a calf problem. When the Holland striker was having his sulks, Bassett targeted Blake as a replacement, only to be told that a £3 million fee was beyond Forest's means. Within six weeks the player, who cites Bassett as an important influence, having played for him at Sheffield United, had joined Blackburn for £1 million more.

Brian Kidd, still unbeaten as the Blackburn manager, has warned of the dangers of seeking a quick-fix solution, but this is precisely what Bassett needs. "If we finish the season in seventeenth place I will be delighted," he said. He can analyse the whys and wherefores afterwards.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (4-2-2): D. Beasant - J. O. Hejden, J. Mattsson, S. Chettle - A. Rogers (sub), C. Amadio, 69, 81 - S. Sidani, S. Gerrard, A. Johnson, C. Barry-Villiers, M. Shearer (sub), U. Harewood, 43, D. Freeman. BLACKBURN ROVERS (4-2-2): J. Fagan - J. Korner, S. Henchoz, C. Dool, C. Dool, 80 - P. Gilchrist (sub), D. Johnson, 77, 11, M. Mattsson, T. Shannon, J. Wilcox - C. Sutton, M. Beasant. Referee: S. Lodge.

Nationwide League: Weakened Ipswich good enough to strengthen grip on second place

Burley's boys filling men's shoes

Sheffield United 1 Ipswich Town 2

By RICHARD HOBSON

IPSWICH Town are laying a strong claim to become the "and one other" expected to join Sunderland in winning automatic promotion to the FA Carling Premiership.

However, if George Burley, the Ipswich manager, could take enormous satisfaction from the result, secured with a depleted side courtesy of a late goal from a Yorkshireman, then the likes of Southampton and Nottingham Forest, struggling at the bottom of the top flight, might also derive encouragement of a sort.

After a dire first half in which neither goalkeeper was forced to make a save of note, Ipswich took the lead fortuitously in the 49th minute. A shot by Peta was deflected off Derry into the path of Abou, on loan from West Ham, who slotted the ball into the corner of the net from 14 yards.



Bramble, who made an assured debut in the Ipswich defence, provides a study in concentration as Marker whips the ball away with a sliding tackle.

three minutes after his introduction as a substitute, arrived first at the far post to put away the loose ball. Derry volleyed narrowly wide seven minutes later, but Ipswich just about deserved the victory provided by a last-minute glancing header by Naylor from Clapham's free kick.

christened Titus Bramble, 17, all 6ft 3in of him, enjoyed an encouraging debut in defence and with his strength and pace brought to mind Sol Campbell.

that started the season we were without nine players either sold, injured or suspended. The squad needs strengthening, but at least we are in a strong position.

Taylor and Dean Saunders, the recently departed strikers, with players of equal quality. Opportunities for younger players are presenting themselves — six of the team were 21 or under — but, after last season's serious challenge for promotion, supporters expected the club to kick on rather than fall behind.

who declined to pick himself, said: "I could not have asked for any more from the players and what happened at the end was cruel." As is management, as he must realise.

Blake puts sparkle in Jewell's eye

Bradford City 2 Wolverhampton W 1

By PAT GIBSON

ONCE a Scouser, always a Scouser. Jewell, the Bradford City manager who was brought up at Liverpool before embarking on a career at Valley Parade, had been asked to "clarify the position" of Lee Mills, the striker he bought from Port Vale for £1 million at the start of the season.

What the questioner wanted to know was how severely the sending-off of Mills against Swindon Town the week before was going to affect Bradford's challenge for a place in the FA Carling Premiership.

overly concerned about it. The reason for that was the form of Robbie Blake, who, in contrast to Mills and Isaiah Rankin, another striker signed from Arsenal for £1.3 million, was picked up for next to nothing from Darlington on transfer deadline day two seasons ago.

As Colin Lee, the Wolverhampton Wanderers manager, said, with some justification: "The boy was outstanding. If you had put him in our team this afternoon, the result might have been reversed."

There was a bit more to it, but Blake, 22, only 5ft 9in yet sturdy built, has been a revelation in Bradford's climb to third in the Nationwide League first division.

At the start of the season, he was a long way down the pecking order, behind not only Mills and Rankin but also Gordon Watson, the former Sheffield Wednesday and Southampton striker, Edinho, the

Brazilian, and Rob Steiner, who is scoring goals on loan to Queens Park Rangers.

"Robbie is beginning to fulfil his potential," Jewell said. "He has always had the ability but he is a lot fitter and leaner now and can do things on the ball for longer periods of time. He is not going to be able to play like that every week, but if I can get a level of consistency out of him, he's going to be a terrific player."

"I will be happy if Blake and Mills play together for the rest of the season, because it would mean that they were doing the business and we would still have quality players like Rankin and Watson trying to get in."

Lee only wishes that he had such an embarrassment of riches. Wolverhampton played well enough for 20 minutes, but once Blake had capitalised on some poor defending to score his ninth goal of

the season with a crisp, low shot, only the heroics of Stowell, their goalkeeper, kept them in the game.

Ironically, it was a stunning save by Walsh, his opposite number, from Connolly that led to Bradford's second goal after 50 minutes. Blake breaking away to set up Mills for his fourteenth goal this season.

It was only after Wolverhampton switched to 4-4-2 that they pulled a goal back through Keane and briefly threatened Bradford's supremacy, prompting Lee to admit that he would like to play that way all the time, but just does not have the players to do it.

BRADFORD CITY (4-4-2): G. Walsh — S. West (sub), A. Westwood (80min), D. Moore, A. O'Brien, W. Jacobs — J. Lawrence, S. MacCall, G. Whalley, P. Bagnare — R. Blake, L. Mills (sub), G. Watson, R. Keane.

WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS (3-5-2): M. Steiner — D. Richards (sub), M. Gale, S. J. Curtis, S. Sedgley — M. Adams, C. Robinson, N. Emberton, S. Conice (sub), G. Wrightman, S. L. Taylor — D. Connolly, R. Keane. Referee: S. Bennett.

Taylor's return not a happy one

Grimsby Town 2 Watford 1

By MARTIN WOODS

WHILE Bryan Robson, the former England captain, was enjoying a dream return to Old Trafford, another old player and former England manager was finding that giving six years of your life to a club counts for nothing when Nationwide League points are at stake.

Graham Taylor, who spent the first six years of his playing career at Grimsby, brought his Watford side to Blundell Park seeking the win that would leave them in second place behind Sunderland.

Taylor confined himself for this match to a watching brief from the main stand, leaving Kenny Jackett and Luther Blissett on dugout duty. From the back of this quaint, wooden

stand, the fan has a restricted view, aerial contests remaining largely a matter of conjecture until the ball drops back into view. A cynic might say that, given Taylor's footballing philosophy, a large portion of the match could well pass you by since the ball would probably be in orbit for most of it.

At full time on Saturday such cynicism would have been well and truly shown the door as Taylor's men, composed and diligent, competed with Alan Buckley's hard-working side to produce a minor classic of pass-and-move football.

Indeed, Taylor's only concession to his up-and-at-em pedigree was to run his side's socks off in the pre-match warm-up. The policy almost bore fruit in the opening minute when Kingsley Black hit the post with Chamberlain stranded.

The first half was fairly even with Grimsby's approach

Room at the top for Reid

Birmingham City 0 Sunderland 0

By KEITH PAXE

THEY have forged their way clear of the pack on a wave of goals, a remarkable succession of victories and a diet of inferior opposition, and on Saturday they surely passed their final Premiership entrance examination. By their refusal to yield to much the better team on the day, Sunderland extinguished any flickering doubts about their credentials and destiny.

Before the match, the theme from The Magnificent Seven boomed out of the St Andrew's public address system in tribute to Birmingham City's demolition of Oxford United the previous week, and such was their commitment and superior possession that the DJ must have said: So You Win Again cued to play them; off. Instead it was Miss You Nights in recognition of Gary Rowett's extraordinary second-half blunder and John Wayne's True Grit as Sunderland rode off with the point that temporarily stretched their lead in the Nationwide League first division.

Rowett's aberration came 12 minutes from the end of a taut and passionate affair in which not the least impressive factor was the firm but sympathetic refereeing of Mark Halsey. The robotic card-flourishers of the FA Carling Premiership could profit from watching a wider of this game to see how players' respect for the laws and its enforcers can be gained by clear and correct decisions more easily than it can be lost by a rush to take both names and centre stage.

The footage that could haunt Rowett and his team was playing soon after the

former Derby County defender bravely visited the press room to explain his attempt at Probably The Worst Miss Ever: How didn't I score? I'll have to watch myself to find out," Rowett said before the replay showed him unmasking his first with his right foot, then with his left, as the ball sat on the six-yard line begging to be knocked in. "Finished like a true centre half," Rowett admitted, wishing that he could swap one of the meaningless goals that he scored against Oxford for one of much greater worth.

Almost all of Birmingham's other efforts were struck from 18 yards or more as Sunderland, with a Ball tackling destructively in front of a disciplined and overworked back four, kept them largely at arm's length despite the relentless nature of the attacks. Ball left the ground on crutches, his bruised ankle the legacy of a monumental display.

Sunderland, through Gray just before half-time and DiCicco near the end — Rowett atoned in part by shepherding the latter's effort away with Poole beaten — might even have won it, but that would have been a gross injustice.

Instead, Peter Reid's team had to content themselves with a sequence of results that brooks little argument: one defeat in 31 games, only five in 60 in the league. When these teams meet again, on the final day of the campaign, the championship will surely be theirs: Birmingham might just have something to celebrate then, too.

BIRMINGHAM CITY (4-4-2): K. Poole — G. Rowett, G. Abbot, M. Johnson, S. Marsh (sub), D. Whalley, S. McCarty, S. Robinson, M. O'Connor, P. Haddock — S. Polkinghorne, A. Adubola.

SUNDERLAND (4-4-2): T. Scanlon — C. Allen, A. Haddock, P. Reid, M. Gray (sub), D. Whalley, T. K. Black, L. Scott, M. Gray (sub), G. McCarty, T. M. Bridges, N. Quinn. Referee: M. Halsey.

Graydon states strong case for late starters

Walsall 1 Stoke City 0

By BILL EDGAR

WHILE David Platt attempts to prove to Sampdoria supporters that youth is no barrier to managerial success, another former Aston Villa player continues to state an eloquent case for those making a belated start in the profession.

The pressure may not be as intense for Ray Graydon in the West Midlands as it will be for Platt in western Italy, but the presence of Walsall in second place in the Nationwide League second division suggests that the 51-year-old

has come of age after just half a season in management. Graydon had spent so long as a coach that his summer move into what is increasingly by a young man's occupation came as something of a shock to Brian Little, his former attacking partner at Villa and now the Stoke City manager.

However, Little was not surprised on Saturday by a gritty display from Walsall that knocked his side off the top of the table, a position they had occupied for all but a couple of weeks of the season.

"Walsall are well organised, they don't give a lot away," Little said. "They haven't got to where they are just on luck."

Indeed, the home side

defended resolutely after Rammell headed his twelfth goal of the season just before half-time, the first that Stoke had conceded in five league matches. Graydon said: "The players have worked hard to get into this position. It would be a shame if we didn't go on to do something from now."

The fact that Little and Graydon are both chasing promotion with Staffordshire clubs is apt, considering that their playing careers often progressed in tandem. They each scored 21 times in the 1974-75 season to help Villa back into the old first division and win the League Cup, a competition in which both scored in finals during that decade.

Just as Little was arguably the bigger name of the two on the pitch, he now has the bigger club in his charge. Nevertheless, he believes that Walsall, who were taken up from the third division three years ago by Chris Nicholl — yet another player to score a League Cup final goal for Villa in the 1970s — are capable of another promotion. "I would be a fool if I said they can't go up," Little declared.

WALSALL (4-4-2): J. Walker — C. Marsh, R. Green, I. Ridge, N. Panton — D. Wreak, B. Lamson, D. Keane, P. Bennett, 67min, Rammell, W. Oats (sub), J. Bennett, 67min.

STOKE CITY (3-5-2): C. Muggleton — L. Scarsdale, P. Bennett, D. Wield (sub), B. Pury, 83 — K. Keane, D. Oldfield (sub), R. Walker, S. G. Kavanagh, R. Corvett, B. Pury, 83 — K. Lightbourne (sub), D. Corvett, S. P. Thomas. Referee: E. Wolstenholme.

Cardiff keep winning habit

Cardiff City 4 Mansfield Town 2

By A CORRESPONDENT

IT IS hard to believe that things come so easily for Cardiff City these days. Winning, especially at home, has become second-nature thanks to John Williams, who used to deliver Christmas presents of an altogether different kind.

The former postman, who arrived at Ninian Park via, among others, Coventry City, is scoring as if it is going out of fashion. His brace against Mansfield Town means the third division leaders will celebrate Christmas with a four-point advantage. It is

impressive and hugely deserved. Even Frank Burrows, the Cardiff manager, who is so often careful in patting backs, can be satisfied with the first half of the season.

"We are pleased to be there and we will give it everything we can to remain there. The quality of football we are playing and the way the players have settled in together so quickly has really pleased me," Burrows said. The price of success is that several Premiership clubs are regularly running the rule over youngsters like Mark Delaney and Scott Young.

Both players contributed significantly to this victory, although the finishing touches were provided by Williams.

who scored twice and played a large part in another outstanding performance. He scored the first on 12 minutes, latching on to a cross from Danny Hill to bundle the ball over the line. Their second came courtesy of another Williams strike and although Mansfield were level by the hour mark, City took all three points courtesy of Kevin Nugent. City have now beaten fellow promotion hopefuls Southampton and Mansfield in recent weeks.

CARDIFF CITY (4-4-2): J. Hackett — M. Delaney, G. Mitchell, S. Young, M. Ford — W. O'Brien, C. Middleton, R. Carpenter, D. Hill (sub), A. A. A. (sub), J. Williams, K. Nugent (sub), D. Thomas, 85.

MANSFIELD TOWN (4-4-2): S. Taylor — T. Ford, S. Horne, S. Pinder, D. Lee (sub), W. Walker, 85 — W. Hooton, J. Scarsdale, L. Pearce, I. Christie. Referee: R. Oliver.

Supporters demand Green goes

Cheltenham Town 3 Stevenage Borough 0

By WALTER GAMMIE

CHELTEHAM TOWN feasted off a demoralised Stevenage Borough to gain a convincing victory in their chase for Football Conference title at Whaddon Road on Saturday. Sixty visiting supporters vented their ire at a limp Stevenage display by calling for the head of Victor Green, the chairman, in a brief demonstration.

It was understandable. Green's decision to dismiss Paul Fairclough, the manager at the heart of the club's rise, was something that Noel Blackwell, his assistant and now caretaker manager, could not lift from the players' minds.

Blackwell admitted that he

"would have to talk to a couple of people and think over" his position as caretaker. Only the suddenness of Green's move, and a deeply engrained feeling for a club that he had served for ten years, had stopped him immediately following Fairclough out of the club.

Stevenage's self-inflicted wounds notwithstanding, Cheltenham played marvellously well. They not only kept a fourth consecutive Conference clean sheet but this time supplied the goals missing in their previous matches against Dover Athletic and Leek Town.

They did it without Neil Grayson, who pulled a hamstring against Leek. Happily, his replacement, Dale Watkins, marked his first Conference start of the season after a long-term injury by swiftly and effectively re-establishing his partnership with Jason Eaton.

Eaton profited by hammering in a loose ball, after Watkins had seen

a fierce shot blocked at close range by Taylor. Eaton rose superbly to head in a fine cross by Watkins at the far post for the second.

Ten minutes into the second half, Watkins converted a penalty after Trot had tripped Eaton as he pursued a high, bouncing ball. Watkins showed his composure after being reduced to rage by an off-the-ball incident that saw Reinelt sent off.

Steve Cotterill, the Cheltenham manager, said: "I had thought of getting in a couple of loan players but it's difficult at this time of year. In the end, it was really a question of Dale's fitness — and now you can say that Watkins and Eaton are back."

CHELTEHAM TOWN (4-4-2): M. Duff — G. Barrie, M. Freeman, R. Walker (sub), R. Milton, 70min — K. Knight (sub), C. Walker, 75, D. Norton (sub), J. Braugh, 85, L. Howells, J. Victory — J. Eaton, D. Watkins.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH (4-3-1-2): C. Taylor — J. Davies, M. Smith, R. Trott, D. Rogers — S. Bennett, S. Barry, M. Lowe — R. Reinelt — D. Lammers, C. Allred. Referee: B. Carson.

Delaney's best may not be enough

Manchester United 2 Everton 2

By DAVID POWELL

TWO minutes to go and Everton's grip on The Times FA Youth Cup, won emphatically last May, is working loose. Wayne Evans, of Manchester United, rises to a cross and heads towards goal for what seems a certain winner. This is Gigg Lane, Bury, though, and the spirit of Neville Southall lives on.

Gigg Lane was where Southall went, nearly 20 years ago, from Winstford United, for his first taste of League football, making 39 appearances before moving on to Everton. Now Dean Delaney, who aspires to follow Southall to greatness with Everton, produces a critical save, typical of the defiant old master.

The ball seems destined to squeeze inside Delaney's left post but the goalkeeper gets on to the frame and safeguards a third-round replay at Goodison Park on January 6.

When the United goals went in, the young Irishman had no chance. His handling was immaculate, his reaction saves and command of the area good enough to repel the raids where he did have a chance.

Of the Youth Cup final team, for which Delaney played last season, six players have made it into the Everton first-team squad this term. Delaney has not. His window of opportunity, as a goalkeeper, is a portly by comparison to the skylight for his colleagues.

Colin Harvey, the youth-team manager, agreed that it was harder for a goalkeeper to break through. "It is a job that is about experience," he said.

So, when Everton bought Steve Simonsen, probably the best teenage goalkeeper in English football, from Tranmere Rovers this season, it was hardly the news Delaney wanted.

"When players like that come in, you are going to be disappointed, but you have got to get on with it," he said. Delaney is the No 4 goalkeeper at Everton. An overseas goalkeeper stands at the top, Thomas Myhre, of Norway.

The two goals that Delaney conceded exemplified why Luke Chadwick is thought to be heading the

way of Beckham, Butt, Scholes and the Nevilles: from United youth team to first at an early age. Chadwick scored two breathtaking goals, the first a shot from 20 yards, the second a run through the Everton defence to equalise.

Francis Jeffers shot in from ten yards for Everton's first, but the goal of the game belonged to the combination of Leon Osman and Tony Hibbert. Osman skipped past three United players before laying the ball off to Hibbert whose drive from 25 yards found the top corner. Even Southall, or Schmechel for that matter, would not have stopped that one.

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-2): P. Redfern — M. Lynch, L. Roche, J. O'Shea, K. Wilson — M. Smith, G. Gigg (sub), S. Colquhoun, S. James, C. Chacko — I. Fitzpatrick, P. Whiteman, 85.

EVERTON (4-4-2): D. Delaney — J. Wright, D. Brown, A. Hanson, L. Osman (sub), K. Saganan, A. sub, J. Hibbert, 85 — F. Jeffers, C. Hibbert (sub), G. Danpany. Referee: J. Bostock.

Advertisement for Platt shoes, featuring the text 'Platt', 'In the blea', 'Cho', 'as', 'all w', and 'Fallout from shoes defeat'.

Platt kept out of limelight during first screen test

David Platt is the coach of Sampdoria — yet not the coach, because he has not got the right A levels. The lack of correct coaching qualifications means that he is not allowed to be like a normal coach and sit impotently on the bench. He has to sit impotently in the stand instead.

We have always been fascinated by the cultural divide between British and Italian football. Brits admire Italian subtlety of thought and touch, Italians admire British spirit. The British cannot cope with the sly and thoughtful violence of Italian football, the Italians dislike the in-your-face thuggerly of the British game.

The match between Sampdoria and AC Milan yesterday was an instructive journey into the no man's land between the great footballing cultures of Europe. The interesting bit is that Sampdoria have chosen an Englishman as the de facto coach. That's his job, all right, never mind where he sits.

The coach in Italy is supposed to be a thinker, a planner, a tactician, a shrewd. The appointment of Platt is rather like getting Ron Atkinson to re-write the works of Niccolò Machiavelli — well, the Medici are always a hard side to beat, but we've got some good lads on our side; that Borgia's a good player, he'll run all day for you; and we're going to give it everything we've got.

Platt has no track record in football coaching. In this country we are used to managers and coaches being appointed for no good reason other than the fact that someone likes the cut of their job. Here is an example of an Italian, a people supposedly much more logical about football than us passionate, misty-eyed Brits, doing the same thing.

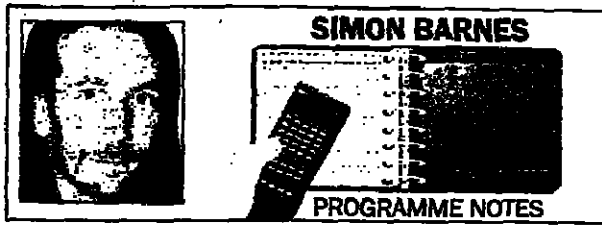
I have often wondered what qualification you really need to be a good coach. I suppose in the end it comes down to the Napoleonic war. "But has he luck?" Napoleon is supposed to have asked this about any general whose name came up for discussion.

Richie Benaud, a shrewd himself, had the temerity to improve on Napoleon, saying that cricket captaincy is 90 per cent luck, 10 per cent skill. "But don't try it without that 10 per cent." Benaud's Law works in most areas of sport, if not most areas of life.

Platt's assignment was, basically, ridiculous. He arrived on Wednesday night and gave a press conference on Thursday in which he showed that he has decent Italian, decent

manners and a decent suit. Yesterday he had to watch his new team attempt to improve on a record in which they had gone all but two months without scoring in open play.

Any big-name manager's first game is always closely watched, as if there was anything he could do with the players he has not selected and troubles he has not caused. This ritual examination is fit



That was a curious thing. If this had been British coverage, we would hardly have had any live action at all. It would all have been shots of Platt looking tense, Platt looking glum, Platt looking relieved. Instead we got a total of four Platt shots all afternoon.

The first came in the 37th minute, when we got the neatly barbered back of his head. A few minutes later we got a shot of him walking away from his seat in a plain but expensive overcoat. In the second half we had a brief glimpse of Platt's right ear and then, after the game was over, we had a shot of him walking away — apparently he had been waving to the Ultras, the fanatical Sampdoria supporters, and they had given him a bit of a cheer.

I think this lack shows an admirable sense of perspective in the Italian programme-makers. Football's truth — perhaps I mean television's truth — is to be found in live action. Anything else it shows is some kind of lie. Never take your eyes off the pitch: nothing else matters while the ball is live.

This is an admirable principle and I wish the gimmick-obsessed coverage of British sport would learn a lesson from this. A good story is a good story without it being rammed down our throats. Action is the jewel in television's crown. The personality of the coach — still less the personality of the director — is not.

'In the bleak midwinter, frosty winds make moan . . . and they can't even beat Blackburn'

Choir sings on as Forest hit all wrong notes

Oddly, in the bleak midwinter was missing from the carols sung at the City Ground, by those sterling chaps of the Bestwood Male Voice Choir. Perhaps its lyrics were deemed just too painful for the occasion. In Nottingham Forest's bleak midwinter, frosty winds are making moan and also blapping the ineffectual shorts of Dougie Freedman. Earth stands hard as iron, they can't even beat Blackburn Rovers, water like a stone, and besides all that, where the hell is Hugsdick?

On Saturday afternoon, you see, Forest managed by their own strenuous efforts to sink to the bottom of the FA Carling Premiership, displacing Southampton. And I may not be popular for saying so, but there was a certain bleak midwinter purity about it. Fifteen consecutive games without a win. The absent Pierre Van Hooijdonk is now suspended for the next three fixtures. "I bet you didn't expect Southampton to beat Wimbledon," I remarked to a Forest board member after the match, by way of light-hearted conversation. He gave me a wry look. "Well, no," he said. "But thank you for mentioning it."

their lips like Les Dawson sucking a sherbet lemon.

A "sore call" was also mentioned, also a "cough". Naturally, I hoped he was afflicted by all three, and wondered momentarily what it must be like for him, being the Sports Personality Least Likely to Get Sympathy When Sick. Nobody's keen to buy him from Forest, apparently. His reluctant employers try "Who will rid us of this expensive Hugsdick?" And all the other clubs say "Blimey, not us."

Yet even without Hugsdick — and even without Blackburn's rival attraction Kevin Davies (on the

goal occurred eight minutes later, after a goalmouth scramble. "Who got that?" I said. "What's going on? Good grief, these binoculars are useless!" Evidently Neil Shipperley had made a shot that John Filan, the Rovers goalkeeper, caught and dropped, and Freedman knocked it in. Such details flashed past me at the time, I must admit. I saw a blur, officer, a blur of red, can't be positive, could have been a mail van. "Shipperley?" I said, mystified, when a consensus on the sequence of events was reached. "I thought Shipperley played for Palace."

So there was good news and bad news for Forest at half-time. The good news was that, at 2-0, they were in the driving seat. The bad news? That they were in the driving seat of the Hindenberg, and had been there 100 often before.

Three weeks ago, against Aston Villa, they also had a two-goal advantage at half-time and then saw Julian Joachim score twice in the second half. That a similar pattern evolved against Blackburn was inevitable. They can't maintain a lead, you see. And call me literal-minded, but it can't help that their sponsor is Pinnacle Insurance. Other people have accident insurance, fire insurance. Forest have pinnacle insurance. I ask you: can this be good for self-belief?

Anyway, four minutes into the second half, Nathan Blake scored Blackburn's first goal, amid a storm of ecstatic cheering from the away supporters. "That was great, wasn't it?" yelled a local press chap next to me — a remark that seemed curious (it was a messy goal) until I realised he'd said "That was Blake, wasn't it?" Of course, I nodded with conviction, and then secretly checked with somebody else. Clearly, this was not my day for winning first prize for observation.

On the other hand, there were occasions when you could hardly believe your eyes — Dave Beasant, the Forest goalkeeper, made a complete twist of himself in the centre circle, when he should have been



O Come All Ye Faithful . . . a joyous Freedman turns away to celebrate his goal with the Nottingham Forest congregation

in his box. And Freedman twice advanced on goal with clear chances and at the last second dithering fatally. The fans were going mad, as you can imagine. A third, clinching goal was needed: Rovers counter-attacked furiously, defenders were dropping like flies, and just when you thought Forest were

clear, the fourth official held up the fateful sign. "Five!" groaned the crowd. Five minutes of extra time were to be played, and at that moment Forest knew it was all up. We all put buckets on our heads, and sure enough Rovers scored again — another untidy goal by Blake — and with one last "How? Why?

Who?" the whistle blew. That was it. Villa revisited.

Noticeably, the choir gave no post-match carols, which was probably wise. "And ye beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way . . ." Well, there'd be a riot. In these secular times, it's a

crying shame, but you really miss the consolation of herald angels. "Is there a God?" some Forest fans may well have asked on the joyless journey home. And when they realised that Hugsdick is getting a nice long Christmas hols at their expense, I suspect they had a less than encouraging answer.

LYNNE TRUSS



bench) — there were impressive thrills and spills in this match. Personally, I said "Ooh" and "Hang on! What?" far more times than is customary. For example, Forest were awarded a penalty in the 22nd minute for something tremendously controversial that I didn't see; and then, when it was scored, I was so busy trying to catch up on the supposed foul (Stephane Henchoz pulling the shirt of Andy Johnson) that I failed to notice who took the kick (Steve Chettle).

"Thank goodness for Match of the Day," I was just thinking, when another complicated Forest

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SPORTS LETTERS

e-mail, including a postal address and daytime telephone number, should be sent to: sport.letters@the-times.co.uk

Fallout from Ashes defeat

From Mr Bryan Pennington
Sir, Of course Australia has kept the Ashes. How could it have been any other way? For two out of the four school terms practically every cricket oval in Australia echoes to the sound of leather on willow.

Primary and secondary school pupils are involved in a sport-for-all programme every weekend. The programme is supported by the schools, local sports clubs and parents. Is it any wonder that Australian sport is so dominant?

Yours faithfully,
BRYAN PENNINGTON,
Head Master,
Sydney Grammar School (St Ives Preparatory),
11-21 Ayres Road,
St Ives 2075,
Australia.

Sideways perception of angling in 1998

From Mr Eric Williams
Sir, From the gossamer-golden web of 1998 recollections spun with his usual unique elegance by your angling correspondent, Brian Clarke (December 7), one knotted strand must be carefully withdrawn.

The Graying Gala report from discreetly unidentified waters above Fullerton Bridge revealed the incident of a captured grayling so enormous that it jammed broadside in a modest carrier — enabling one fortunate participant to cross for lunch rather than plod downstream to the bridge.

What Brian did not disclose was the intervention of a trophy barracuda which charged the

Criticism of British bowls

From Mr and Mrs Derek Booth
Sir, The acerbic comments by Norman Sarsfield (report, December 8) at the Annual Dinner of the English Bowling Association may indeed have appeared as a cold douche when compared to the platitudes normal on these occasions.

The bowling greens at the Commonwealth Games may have been slow and difficult, but this was something that did not affect the players from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa who applied themselves better and therefore were more successful.

The real problem with bowling, the most traditional of British games, is that it has

Jewellery query

From Mr Paul Bate
The photograph (December 14) of George Weah celebrating demanded closer examination. On December 12 I instructed the players in the Hazelbury Plucknett versus Drinton fixture (Perry Street League Division Two) to remove their jewellery. Are the rules in Italy more relaxed? George's saluting right arm indicated that he was wearing

Jewellery query

two rings and at least two wrist bands with another large ring visible on his left hand. If the wearing of jewellery is dangerous, then someone needs to remind Olivier Bierhoff of George's fetishes before he allows himself to be embraced by him in the traditional manner.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL BATE,
30 The Park,
Yeovil, Somerset.
head.parkschool@ukonline.co.uk

Jewellery query

grayling while the angler was negotiating the dorsal fin — and tipped him in. Unfortunately the camera shutter of an observant colleague, sadly spoiling an undoubtedly historic record.

In the interests of accuracy, please draw your correspondent's attention to the intrusion of such predators in Upper Test waters, especially on April 1 when the close season ends. They often arrive in shoals, usually in BMWs.

Yours sincerely,
ERIC WILLIAMS,
Fair Acre, 20 Meadway,
Esher, Surrey KT10 9HF.

Jewellery query

lost its focus with little indication of its role in the century.

Presently we have six national associations running the flat green game, plus two each for the Crown and Short-mat variations. An amalgamation with one organising central office should be established, certainly for the flat game.

The outdoor associations are weighed down with tradition and appear remote from the normal club members, particularly with the EBA's headquarters some way from the logical centre of the game.

The indoor associations appear to be more responsive to the condition of the game, are run more efficiently and, after the rapid growth of the past 20 years, probably have more members. With more clubs now open all year and with national summer competitions, perhaps this is attracting bowlers from the outside game.

The good points of Federation bowling could be absorbed with advantage if the associations could see the benefits of pooling their strengths rather than dwelling on the differences. Then, hopefully, the prosperity of the game could be assured.

Yours in sport,
DEREK AND VERA BOOTH,
Lezardden,
4 Bamburgh Grove,
Royal Leamington Spa,
Warwickshire CV32 6RL.

MAGIC NUMBERS

MAGIC NUMBERS AND FREE CHAMPAGNE

What could be more desirable for anyone with sporting blood in their veins? The Times is again offering a bottle of Taittinger champagne to those who contribute a magic number for Christmas. A magic number is one that carries immense sporting weight and every year throws up new ones.

For 1998 how about 167 — the number of wickets Muttiah Muralitharan took to give Sri Lanka an historic first Test victory in England.

Simon Barnes will judge the champagne-worthiness of entries, which should be sent to:

Magic Numbers,
The Sports Desk, The Times,
1, Pennington Street,
London E1 9NW

or by fax to 0171 782 5211, or e-mail to sport@the-times.co.uk. The final collection will be published shortly after Christmas.

STARTING TOMORROW

England's chances of hosting the World Cup in 2006 seem to be slight. But who will be successful? Rob Hughes, chief sports correspondent, reports from South Africa, Brazil and Germany as the campaign for 2006 reaches its decisive phase



Weah: ringing in the new

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Table with 2 columns: Team and Score. Includes Chelsea (2) Tottenham (0), Coventry (1) Derby (0), Liverpool (2) Blackburn (0), Manchester United (2) Arsenal (0), etc.

Table with 2 columns: Team and Score. Includes Manchester United (2) Arsenal (0), Liverpool (2) Blackburn (0), Tottenham (2) Wimbledon (0), etc.

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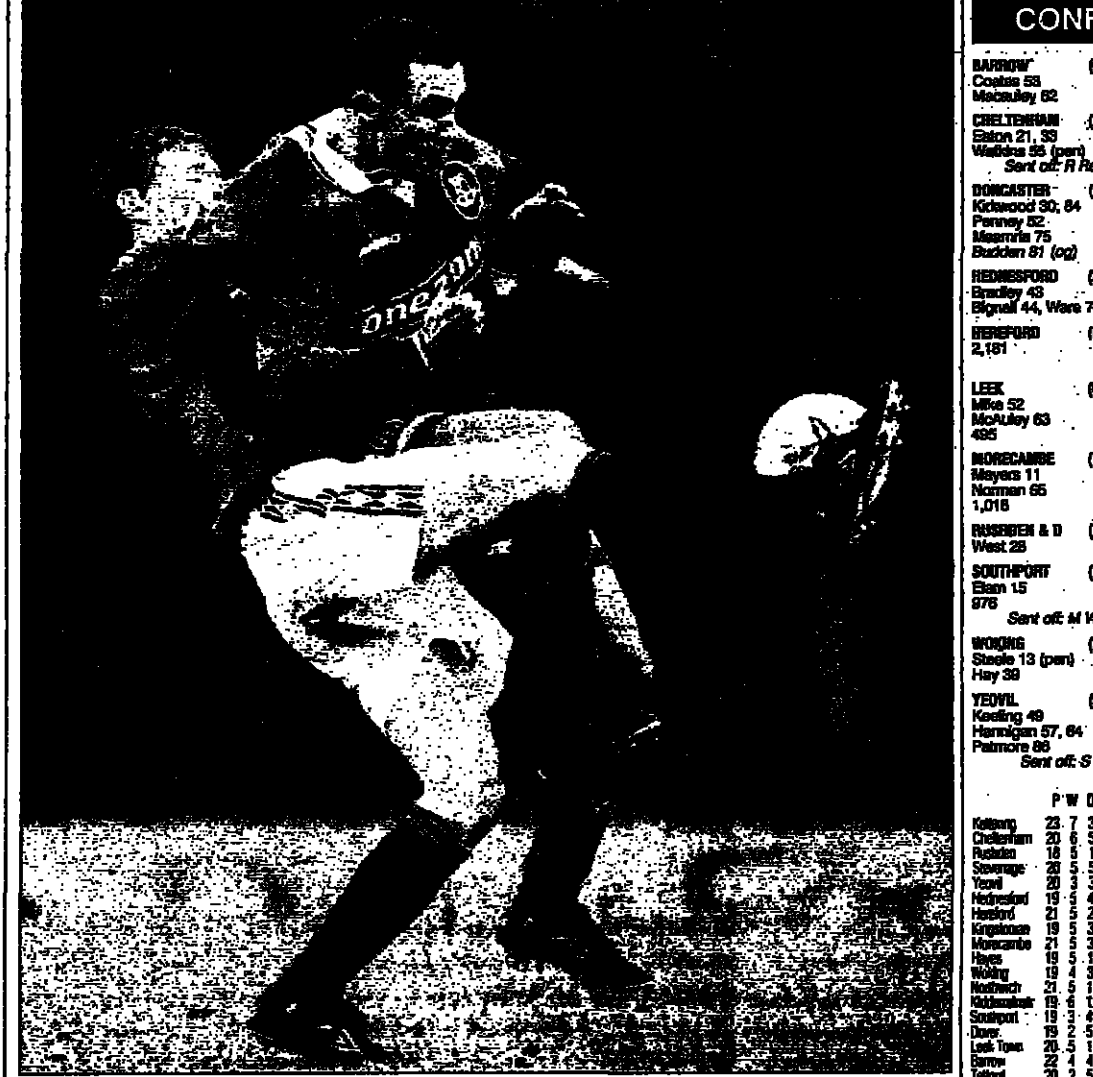
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Lee Roche, of Manchester United, challenges Francis Jeffers, of Everton, in their Times FA Youth Cup tie at Gigg Lane, Bury on Saturday. Report, page 26

NON-LEAGUE AND NATIONAL LEAGUES

Large table containing various non-league and national league results, organized by division and region. Includes sections for Premier Division, First Division, Second Division, and various regional leagues.

CONFERENCE

Table of Conference League results, including teams like Barnet, Forest Green, and Stevenage, with their respective scores.

SCOTLAND

Table of Scottish football league results, including teams like Celtic, Rangers, and Aberdeen, with their respective scores.

VERNONS LOTTERY FOOTBALL GAME

Table showing lottery results for the Vernon's Lottery Football Game, including winning numbers and prize amounts.

Large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page, featuring the 'HUR' logo and various promotional text for a retail store.

Chris McGrath finds Imperial Call's trainer drawing up his game plan for Kempton showpiece

Hurley prepared to take aggressive approach

IT IS not just the grey coat of Teeton Mill that identifies him as a natural successor to...



Get Real, ridden by Fitzgerald, clears the water jump with ease on his way to an impressive victory in the Frogmore Handicap Chase at Ascot on Saturday

RICHARD EVANS
Nap: Prince Consort (1.40 Lingfield Park)
Stuart Williams looks to have found a winning opportunity for his Clansman colt...

Carberry is at Leopardstown on Boxing Day but his replacement - probably Richard Durwoody...

must jump the gulf between winning a Hennessy over 10st 5lb and beating the best at level weights.

well with the horse, but he's a straightforward enough rider. I haven't been to Kempton...

the other way in Ireland, including the last time."
It was round Punchestown last month that Imperial Call embarrassed Dorcas Pride...

as a trainer, but he is absorbing the pressure with insouciance and modesty. "I'm enjoying it," he said.

ing with us two hurdlers that are also running at the meeting. They're all good horses in the King George...

ply Dashing, 9-1 Escartefigue and 14-1 Challenger Du Luc. The Grey Monk runs at Wetherby instead...

with leading the home defence were buoyed by sharing success at Ascot on Saturday. The Betterware Cup win of Torduff Express brought up the half-century in a splendid season for Paul Nicholls...

Kelso off

THE meeting scheduled for Kelso today has been abandoned because of frost. "It's unraceable, particularly in the straight, and it's already starting to freeze..."

useful youngsters in the straight. What makes Hidebound so exciting for Nicky Henderson, who was also on the mark with Get Real, is that he is still naive about racing and looks as though he may prove even better as a staying chaser.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes 12.40 Opera Buff and 1.10 San Glamore Melody.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes 12.40 CHRISTMAS APPRENTICE HANDICAP and 1.10 EASAL HANDICAP.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes 1.40 BEST WISHES TO ALL RACEDRIVERS MEDIUM AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes 2.10 HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE NURSERY HANDICAP.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes 2.40 49'S HANDICAP (SHOWCASE RACE AND TOTE TRIFECTA RACE).

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes 3.10 EASAL HANDICAP.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes 3.40 SEASONS GREETINGS MAIDEN STAKES.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes 2.10 HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE NURSERY HANDICAP.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes 2.10 HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE NURSERY HANDICAP.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes SATURDAY'S RESULTS.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes Ascot.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes Uttoxeter.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes Warwick.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Details. Includes Lingfield Park.

Princiful shows fighting spirit worthy of Pitman

By Chris McGrath

ADVERSITY affects different people in different ways. Faced with the sort of battle that has recently consumed Jenny Pitman's combative encephalitis...



Pitman believes Princiful will be a Gold Cup contender

Seldom can a horse have communicated his bravery so tangibly as when Princiful mustered one final, extra surge to pass Deano's Beacon...

Gradually, however, he began to erode the leader's advantage and on the run-in Richard Dunwoody and Princiful hauled their way upsid...

Gold Cup itself the following year. That is good news, at any rate, for Deano's Beacon, who looks a worthy successor to Princiful's crown in the Bonusprint Stayers' Hurdle.

His narrow defeat was compounded for Pipe by the considerably more abject failure of Tamarindo, pulled up when hot favourite for the Betterware Cup.

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Has Bath's bubble burst?



Surrender: Dejected Bath players troop off the field after Saracens had inflicted a fifth consecutive defeat on the home team at the Recreation Ground on Saturday. Photograph: David Rogers/Allsport

The ghosts of Christmas past will haunt Bath this week. Those great and glorious holiday periods, which promised a new year stuffed with rugby's honours, now hold only the promise of hard work merely to stay with the leaders of the Allied Dumbur Premiership, never mind the cup finals that once seemed theirs by right.

That, in part, is the problem for Andy Robinson after his side's 19-11 defeat against Saracens on Saturday, the club's fifth in succession in the league. It is a sequence to which he never came close as a player and it was a grim-faced Robinson who, as coach, listened to supporters booing the beaten team that trooped off the Recreation Ground and who has been told that he should consider resignation.

David Hands reflects on the sorry decline of a club becoming accustomed to defeat

tactics and a closed-door defence. Once they had repelled Bath's best effort in the first half, Penaud pulling Adebayo Adebayo down just short, there was never a sniff of a try for the West Country club until Penaud's pass found Iain Balshaw in the way and the young wing had the nous and the confidence to chip into space, collect himself and make 50 metres to the corner.

Saracens have now beaten Bath in their last four meetings, victory took them to second place, ahead of Northampton on points difference, and no other first-division club doubts the challenge they will lay down in the second half of the season. Moreover, they have, while they recover their best form, the substantial comfort of Johnson's goalkeeping; his success rate is well over 80

per cent and here four kicks out of five went over, embellishing the work of his forwards and the rumbustious Brendon Daniels on the wing. Only a damaging propensity to concede penalties (Mike Carr's two successful goals, and a further miss, came when Saracens failed to retreat ten metres quickly enough) prevented a more complete victory in which Kyran Bracken showed a welcome return to form. After Daniel's perceptive run out of defence, it was Bracken who, with a hint of a dummy and a powerful swerve, changed bad scrum ball into good and opened up the defence for Steve Ravenscroft to score his side's try.



Robinson: under pressure

should have been at fault, but Saracens rode the mild crisis. Had Penaud not passed too early after a devastating break, they would have scored another try, but the Frenchman screwed the lid down on Bath with a left-footed dropped goal. There was almost a hint of sadness in the voice of Mark Evans, the Saracens director of rugby, when he said: "For so long Bath were in a league of their own, they had an aura that came from that dominance. That no longer exists."

It was Bachop's fifth game for London Irish and far and away his best. If he plays many more games as accomplished as this one, the investment in him will look far more prudent than that made by Harlequins in Thierry Lacroix and his funny footed. There is something dandy about a man who plays in white boots, as if he doesn't want to muddy them. If that is the case, why does he play rugby?

Richmond win name game

London Scottish16
Richmond28

BY BARNEY SPENDER

WAS someone trying to make a point? The centre page of the programme, where the Richmond team was meant to appear, was blank, a list of numbers and positions but not a name in sight. Perhaps like the London Scottish faithful, who struggled to take the gate into four figures, Richmond were unaware that this game was an evening kick-off to accommodate Christmas shoppers. Or maybe their injury list had increased to the extent that there really was no team?

Richards enjoys attritional contest

Gloucester18
Leicester23

BY MARK SOUSTER

THAT will do nicely. Dean Richards, never the most demonstrative of men, wore the satisfied smile of someone for whom life is going rather well at the moment. The relief of a vital away win, at a subdued Kingsholm of all places, two more points in the bag, and the prospect of celebrating Christmas starting down from the top of the Allied Dumbur Premiership.

looked like losing, even without Stransky, who should be fit in three weeks, and Greenwood, who between them would surely have made better use of the mass of possession that Leicester enjoyed.

were streets ahead, they controlled their possession far better, countered Gloucester's drives, and in Martin Corry at No 8 they had the game's outstanding player.

It is a recurring theme, however, and at some stage Hill must look to himself if he does not crack it. After this defeat he virtually conceded any hope of the title, saying league points were now of secondary importance to his aim of winning the mental fight.

to move the ball away from the Harlequins' strength. They did this, at times quite stunningly, apart from 10 minutes at the start of the second half, when Schuster kicked two penalty goals to pass the 200 points for the season, and Harlequins led, this was not to be their day, despite the thunderous power of their forwards.



Sanders, under close attention from Healey, feeds the Gloucester backs at Kingsholm

Newport edge through

NEWPORT have a distinguished place in Welsh rugby history, despite the lack of recent success, whereas Llanharan cannot boast much in the way of notable achievement. But the famous black-and-amber coloured club nearly came to grief in the fourth round of the Swalec Cup on Saturday against their less illustrious opponents.

Worcester feel the chill

Rotherham29
Worcester19

BY A CORRESPONDENT

THIS is the time of year when you would expect a warm glow from a central heating magnate like Cecil Duckworth. Instead, the usual amiable smile of the Worcester owner has been replaced by a frosty countenance and not just because his side were outscored by four tries to one by Rotherham in the second division of the Allied Dumbur Premiership on Saturday.

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Bachop imposes pattern of play

London Irish20
Harlequins16

BY JOHN HOPKINS

STEPHEN BACHOP looks bulky for a fly half and, at 32, is far from the first flush of youth. But, goodness knows, the former All Black can control a game. Demonstrating why he has won five caps for New Zealand and seven for Western Samoa, Bachop moved Harlequins around ceaselessly on Saturday until the men in the multicoloured shirts hardly knew which way was up.

You never knew quite what Bachop was going to do next, whether he would kick or run. He would feint to run to the open side then double back around the scrum to penetrate the blind side. One minute he was scampering through a half gap, the next he was slipping the ball behind him to a team-mate coming across at an angle. As if that was not enough, there was his try. He ran this in from halfway, the glorious end to a breathtaking move that began, as near as you like, on London Irish's line and bids fair to be one of the tries of the season.

Some saw this as another occasion for Dick Best, London Irish's director of rugby, to put one over on his former club, and so it proved. Victory was deserved over a team which, under the pragmatic direction of Zinzan Brooke, had won its past six games in the Allied Dumbur Premiership. The only area in which London Irish were not superior was the lineout.

Spiced up Vikings

As any amateur etymologist will know, the Vikings were responsible for leaving us with most of the less-printable words in the English language...

THEATRE

in a theatrical context, sharing the narrative and adopting appropriate characters in turn. The rather sedate opening of the creation myth feels about as incomprehensible as a Wagner prelude...

Everything changes with the second story, however, and suddenly the gods become well, human and believable, and the actors begin to tumble about in a gymnastic style made even more impressive by the fact that they are performing on a stage the size and height of a teaspoon.

The stories themselves are great fun; full of sexual misbehaviour, jealousy and subterfuge. The cast clearly relish their turn of phrase: "Ask her, Sir, or your husband will be no more use to you than a kipper," begs a desperate Thor at one point...

HETTIE JUDAH

CINEMA: Geoff Brown picks his ten top films from a year when Hollywood decided that size mattered most



Steven Spielberg won plaudits for authenticity in his portrayal of the Normandy D-Day landings in Saving Private Ryan, and even more for attempting to raise moral questions

Oversized, overlong and over here

Back in 1983, in a move to stimulate sagging admissions, British distributors decided to change cinema programmes on a uniform day, Thursday. The effect was insignificant.

Now the situation is different. New films open on Friday. Admission figures are buoyant. And after James Cameron's epic, rearranging the RMS Titanic's seating does not automatically sound like wasted time.

While critics snorted about the puffing plot and shallow characters, audiences, especially teenagers, took Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet to their hearts. These were their identification figures, and they did not care what cornball dialogue the pair spouted.

and its dauntingly realistic opening description of the D-Day landings at Omaha Beach. It also stands out by attempting to raise moral questions. Spielberg's film lacked something too. You might call it the fun factor. For all its triumphs, one would not rush to see Private Ryan again for a considerable while, which is not the case with the ebullient delights of Tarantino's craftily cast crime yarn Jackie Brown...

But this is the season of goodwill, even towards Hollywood, and any industry that can embrace films as distinctive as Kundun, The Truman Show, The Apostle, Saving Private Ryan, Jackie Brown and Boogie Nights must be doing something right. Like Titanic, Saving Private Ryan looms large partly through its size.

Before too many trumpets are blown in mind that any industry that can fail to nominate The Ice Storm for an Oscar must be doing something wrong. And how goes the renaissance in the British Isles? It splutters, as our film renaissances have always done. The few titles that take in decent sums - this year Sliding Doors and Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels - obscure the many that rake in very little, or can never find a distributor.

Keanu Loach efficiently padded his usual canon in his Glasgow romance My Name is Joe. Neil Jordan narrates a toxic blend of horror, pathos and gallows humour in The Butcher Boy. But neither took the breath away like John Boorman's The General, that dynamic portrait of the buccaneering Irish criminal Martin Cahill. Here was a film that leapt off the screen, dazzling the eyes, provoking the mind with its see-sawing moods and delight in Ireland's rebel

stalked Taste of Cherry, from Iran's Abbas Kiarostami, a lyrical and humane film with a fable's resonance. And France came up trumps with two fine first features, Bruno Dumont's La Vie de Jésus, a rigorous but tender drama about aimless rural youth, and Erick Zvonka's marvellously acted study of friendship, The Dream Life of Angels.

Directors with wider reputations, the kind who usually set up shop at the Curzon Mayfair, produced little to equal this roster. Pedro Almodóvar gave us Live Flesh, a full-blooded, constantly surprising treatment of a Ruth Rendell thriller, packed to the sprocket holes with inventive imagery and outrageous characters tortured by love and desire. French cinema's best shot was Philippe de Broca's enjoyable swashbuckler Le Bossu, which did good business; its worst was Claude Berri's calcified Resistance drama Lucie Aubrac. The usual dazzlers from China or Taiwan were absent.

So from this celluloid heap of the year's releases, what should I pick for my ten best? This is hard, though it would be easier if some films could have post-release surgery. I would therefore suggest The General, The Ice Storm, Love is the Devil, The Dream Life of Angels, Taste of Cherry, Live Flesh, Mother and Son, Saving Private Ryan (minus a few scenes), an abbreviated Titanic, and Kundun with the slack taken out. Now if you will excuse me, I have some deck chairs to rearrange.

Parano stalks Will Smith in the fast-paced political thriller Enemy of the State. RELEASED: Boxing Day REVIEW: Thursday

This week in THE TIMES



THEATRE Gilbert and Sullivan's Pirates of Penzance cast anchor at the Queen's OPENS: Tonight REVIEW: Wednesday



OPERA Elena Kelessidi sings in the Royal Opera's new The Golden Cockerel OPENS: Tomorrow REVIEW: Thursday



DANCE Sarah Wildor makes her debut in the Royal Ballet's Cinderella. Festival Hall PERFORMANCE: Wed REVIEW: Next week



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Adventure that falls flat on its face

Phyllida Lloyd certainly makes the audience wait for the first laugh in her new production of Bizet's opera in Leeds, until the fourth act to be precise, when the crowd greets the rock star-style Escarillo by brandishing about three dozen posters of him in sultry George Michael profile: just one of them is upside down. It is a wonderful moment and I hope it was intentional, though production photographs cast doubt on this. Otherwise, this is a defiantly dour, unseasonal offering. Someone at Opera North has carelessly omitted to inform Miss Lloyd that *Carmen* is a comedy, though one hoped she might have found this out for herself. Maybe she worked only from the frankly dreadful Keith and Emma Warner "version" of the text — it is too far from the original to be called a translation — with its senseless juxtaposition of self-conscious modernisms and pure translatorese. The dialogue was apparently "reworked in rehearsal" and such sparkling lines as "move yer arse" may give some impression of the quality of this reworking.

You would think that *Carmen*, at once one of the most popular as well as the most accomplished of all operas, would be fail-safe, but it must have suffered more duff stagings than almost any other. This production has, I fear, been misconceived from the word go, and one reason is probably too close a study of its source, Prosper Mérimée's novella (1845). This, a masterpiece in its own right, is a hering of rosiest hue, and any effort to revert to it when staging Bizet's *opéra comique* of 30 years later is, as even Peter Brook failed to notice, to chase a wild goose up a blind alley.



OPERA
Carmen
Grand, Leeds

Bizet and his librettists transformed *Carmen* from the darksome, homicidal criminal of the novella into a creature of light, a free-spirited woman who controls her life — and the men in it — largely through humour: she makes one mistake, which is to get mixed up with a mother-fixated spoilt priest, and pays with her life. This does not prevent the opera from being basically a sprightly musical comedy that takes a wrong turn, as Oscar Hammerstein knew well — *Carmen Jones* is a fit and worthy tribute to Bizet. The music is for the most part witty, flip, ironic, detached, the control of dramatic mood faultless, not that you would necessarily gather this from Andras Ligeti's heavy-breathing, sub-vertano reading in Leeds.

While the Spanishness of the music is very much filtered through French sensibility and not all that important, there is no mention of Seville in the programme synopsis, probably a prudent move since the picture the production presents of Spain today would have Madrid recalling its ambassador for consultation. The military beat up and rob backpackers, and are prone to gang rape and abusing children. The smugglers deal in cocaine and snort it on stage — gosh, how *daring* — and are deadly serious about it: there is not a laugh anywhere in the central acts.

Against this irrelevant background certain essential elements go missing, like any idea of who Carmen and Don

José are, any sense of their current or potential relationship, and without that *Carmen* can seem a very long and pointless opera. I fear this is a case of a production team aiming at being amazingly adventurous, helping Auntie Opera to show us her knickers. Well, sorry sweethearts, Auntie Opera has been showing us her knickers for 400 years now, and what you have come up with is desperately old-fashioned, and tedious with it. *Carmen* is one of the supreme masterpieces of opera, and you haven't come within ten miles of it.

Which is sad, because in Ruby Philogene there is a protagonist of boundless potential. She has the right smooth, smokey mezzo and the looks to drive men mad. She is young yet, and lacks weight in the lower register, but wisely desists from replacing it with chesty hooting. In about ten years' time, if she meets a director who allows her to play Bizet's rather than Mérimée's *Carmen*, and a conductor more sympathetic to French music, she will be marvellous.

Not a lot else to report. The hugely promising Antoni Garfield Henry was in thin voice on Saturday, save at the very top of his range — some impressively beefy high notes — and was made to play Don José as a whining, whimpy hysteric. Mark Stone was very funny as the rock star Toreador but he, too, is young yet and doesn't quite have the bottom notes. Susannah Glanville was a bright, positive Micaela. The chorus was good, the orchestra as good as they could be under a conductor who showed little sympathy with the quintessential elegance of the score.

RODNEY MILNES



Ruby Philogene (*Carmen*) and Antoni Garfield Henry (*Don José*) in Phyllida Lloyd's new staging for Opera North

Outrage with flair

A true sense of occasion surrounded Marilyn Manson's only British appearance of the year at a sold-out Brixton Academy. Until recently, Britain had been slow to warm to the Los Angeles-based band, whose eponymous frontman and chief strategist, formerly Brian Warner, is a self-made freak of libertarian Satanist sympathies who delights in outraging America's Religious Right. But his recent adoption of a more populist sound and image, combined with his growing reputation for astounding live shows, have clearly won over many floating voters.

The band's highly melodramatic set shamelessly plundered rock history for both musical and visual inspiration. The supercharged thrash metal sound of their first two albums was much in evidence, albeit now heavily informed by the music which soundtracked Warner's youth, notably 1980s new wave and 1970s glam rock. There were numerous allusions to David Bowie and Roxy Music, the architects of this school of stylised rock theatre, although Alice Cooper, Kiss and Iggy Pop have been major influences too.



POP
Marilyn Manson
Brixton Academy

But Marilyn Manson are no mere copyists. Their sense-swamping spectacle elevated the lurid sensationalism of previous generations to new heights using cutting-edge technology, adding samplers and delecting industrial noise to a nihilistic orgy of make-up, props and costume changes. This was Orwellian rock opera of exhilarating intensity, eschewing the self-glorifying pantomime of orthodox rock shows for a self-lacerating commentary on fame, fan worship and false idols.

The pace of the show was sluggish at first, and it initially seemed that Warner's high-camp histrionics were not translating well to a jaded London audience. But five or six numbers in, the visual presentation moved into high gear, which helped to compensate for some of the more characterless songs. The crowd also responded, rapturously to two shrewdly chosen cover versions, a funeral demolition of the Eurythmics' hit *Sweet Dreams* and a savage assault on Patti Smith's feminist punk classic *Rock 'n' roll Nigger*.

Throughout the impressive choreographed set, Warner adopted several savagely satirical guises, including a hellfire preacher, a totalitarian dictator and an androgynous stripper. During one hymn to doomed and dysfunctional love, *Mechanical Animals*, he towered above the stage on giant stilts and crutches like some bizarre insect from the imagination of a warped Dr Seuss. Later, for the band's provocatively titled new single *I Don't Like the Drugs (But the Drugs Like Me)* he adopted the persona of a nightmarish game show host.

Apart from such tabloid-baiting stunts as simulated masturbation, Marilyn Manson did little to justify their reputation for controversy. Nor did they deliver many truly memorable tunes besides their stamping former singles *The Doge Show* and *The Beautiful People*. Warner will require a few more genuine anthems before he assumes the messianic mantle of his childhood heroes, but his intelligence, black humour and flair for confrontational theatre remain unequalled in modern rock.

STEPHEN DALTON

In the concrète jungle

Enter the loudspeakers, exit the audience. Not even Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony*, the exotic and colour excesses of which are well-known to the regulars at Symphony Hall, could secure more than a respectable attendance at a concert featuring two pre-recorded works in the first half and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra only after the interval.

Birmingham Electroacoustic Sound Theatre is expert in presenting electronic music and Jonty Harrison certainly made enterprising use of the space and the many loudspeakers in it. But so what? Musical interest, or anything equivalent to it, is minimal in Edgard

Vartse's *Poème électronique*, and non-existent in Francis Dhomont's *Chiaroscuro* which, except where it discovers the sound of running water, is a monument to aridity.

In an overlong spoken introduction to the concert, the conductor David Robertson and Harrison attributed the presence of the electronic pieces partly to the fiftieth anniversary of Pierre Schaeffer's discovery of *musique concrète* and partly to Messiaen's use in *Turangalila* of a sort of electronic instrument called the



CONCERTS
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ondes martenot, which is also 50 years old this year. The irony is that on this occasion, as on many others, there were problems in integrating the instrument with the orchestra. Happily, the ondes martenot did not uniformly dominate the proceedings which, after

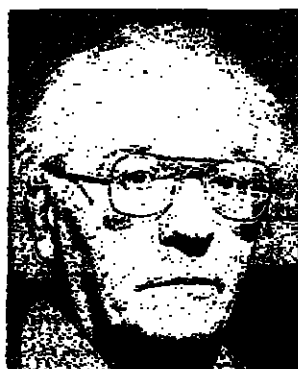
the example of Jeanne Loriod — the composer's sister-in-law who took part in the first performance — was in danger of becoming accepted as the authentic performing tradition.

As Cynthia Millar played it, the problem was usually the opposite. It is clear from the scoring of *Jardin du sommeil d'amour*, for example, that the balance should favour the ondes rather than the first violins playing in unison with it. If it does not — and if, moreover, their timing is not quite synchronised — the unique col-

ouring of the movement is lost. Similarly, the uninhibited screech of the instrument in the preceding movement, *Joie du sang des étoiles*, is essential to the narrative content. And yet there were other passages where its profile was clearly too high.

It cannot be easy for a guest conductor, however expert in these matters, to come in and sort out such problems in just a few hours of rehearsal. Robertson apparently had trouble too in clarifying the textures to make the inner layers of interest consistently audible. He did, on the other hand, conduct a performance of considerable physical exhilaration. In Pierre-Laurent Aimard he had an inspired piano soloist who was particularly successful at those points where he alone takes over from the orchestra in full flight and, against all the odds, is expected to sustain the intensity.

GERALD LARNER



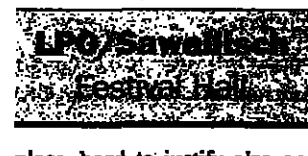
Olivier Messiaen: posed problems of integration

Arabian knight

On paper at least, the final programme of the London Philharmonic's Rimsky-Korsakov Festival looked odd. Wolfgang Sawallisch's distinguished career has not been made conducting this composer, and *Scheherazade* is the one Rimsky work that does not need help. Putting it in the context of works dating from the same period by two of Rimsky's contemporaries would have been a good idea had they not seemed so arbitrarily chosen: Sibelius and Brahms featured only fleetingly in the Russian composer's consciousness.

But then the choice of Sibelius's *Swan of Tuonela* began to make sense. As one of the few liberal Russian composers, Rimsky would probably have approved of the national movement in a Finland still under the Russian yoke, especially as its strongest voices were all artistic and the way in which that movement drew its strength from legends such as the *Kalevala* would have also appealed to the folklorist in him. This is one of the simplest and strongest of Sibelius's *Kalevala* works, at least when performed as movingly as here: the divided LPO strings glistened as the swan on the river of death was conjured up by Sue Bohling's cor anglais, and Sawallisch was attentive to every detail.

Brahms's Double Concerto, though, seemed doubly out of



place, hard to justify also on the basis of this unsettled and hard-edged account. Sawallisch failed to draw warm enough playing from the orchestra, but the real problem was an ill-matched pair of soloists. Communication between the violinist Dmitry Sitkovetsky and cellist Truls Mørk was minimal, both suffered intonation problems, and their very different styles blended poorly: Mørk's intense, sometimes wiry sound was just too different from Sitkovetsky's icy tone and demeanour.

At least the decision to close the series with *Scheherazade* was vindicated by a dazzling performance here. It is too easy to take the piece for granted, but this was a reminder that it is a work of great genius, the peak of Russian musical orientalism. Sawallisch evoked all the story-telling excitement and languid beauty, although it was hard not to reflect on the grim irony of such descriptive titles as *The Festival of Baghdad*. The orchestra's polished playing had both sweep and intimacy, and the leader, Joakim Svanheden, shone in the solos representing Scheherazade herself.

John Allison

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Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for LEISURE & HOTELS.

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Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for OTHER FINANCIAL.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for RETAILERS, FOOD.

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Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for PHARMACEUTICALS.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for BRITISH FUNDS.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for SHORTS (under 5 years).

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for LONGS (over 15 years).

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for UNDATED.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of 5%.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for SUPPORT SERVICES.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for TRANSPORT.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for WATER.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for BANKS.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for BREWERIES, PUBS & REST.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for ELECTRICITY.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for BUILDING MATERIALS.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for ELECTRONIC & ELECT.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for CHEMICALS.

Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for CONSTRUCTION.

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Table with columns: Company, Price, % Chg, P/E, Dividend Yield, etc. for PHARMACEUTICALS.

Recession? A couple of tips to cut the travel budget. 1. Ban Air Miles - it's bribery! 2. Fly easyJet. 0870 6 000 000 www.easyJet.com

Out...

5?

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

MPC minutes will stir interest

Christmas week is not an exciting one in UK economic statistics. A dull four days will be enlivened briefly by publication on Wednesday of the minutes of the December meeting of the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee...

Most economists do not expect the Fed to change rates this week, given signs of relative robustness in the US economy. However, a poll by Reuters found that 14 out of the 20 respondents expected the FOMC to cut rates by another quarter point at one of its first two meetings next year.

In Britain, the week's first economic statistic is the final estimate for third-quarter gross domestic product. It is expected to show unrevised growth of 0.4 per cent, giving year-on-year growth of 2.3 per cent.

On Wednesday, global trade figures are published for October with the market consensus, as measured by Standard & Poor's MIMS, against a £2.5 billion shortfall in September. November figures for non-EU trade are expected to show a trade gap of £1.5 billion, against a £1.3 billion shortfall in October.

Other highlights of the week will include an IMF review of world economic prospects, due today, and a European Central Bank council meeting tomorrow. Although national eurozone central banks have already lowered interest rates, the ECB is expected to declare its "interest-rate corridor", the desired upper and lower limits of European rates.

JANET BUSH

Banks' caution leads to sharp fall in buyouts

By PAUL DURMAN

THE number and value of company buyouts has contracted sharply since the banks took fright at market turbulence and the threat of recession.

According to figures from KPMG Corporate Finance, the value of deals slumped in the final quarter to £1.4 billion, against £3.4 billion in the previous quarter. Transaction levels were little more than half the level of a year ago.

Banks became more nervous to lend after the Russian economic crisis threw the bond markets into turmoil. It became difficult to issue the

high-yielding bonds that are used to finance many buyouts and buy-ins.

Mike Stevens, head of MBO services at KPMG Corporate Finance, said: "It became difficult to get other banks to step in to take part of the risk. People who were previously happy to take on £40 million at a time but underwrote £100 million couldn't get someone to take the other £60 million off their hands. So they cut back their commitment to £40 million."

One prominent casualty was the £116 million deal to take Ushers of Trowbridge private. The scheme, led by the brewer's management, fell apart when NatWest Bank withdrew an offer of finance.

This year will still be a record year for buyouts, with £11.8 billion of deals completed. This is almost 45 per cent higher than the 1997 total of £8.2 billion.

Only 27 large buyouts (defined as those worth more than £10 million) were completed in the final quarter - fewer than at any time since the third quarter of 1996. The value of deals has declined month by month, falling from £626

million in October to only £297 million in December.

KPMG said traditional management buyouts continue to decline in importance, and represented 56 per cent by value of this year's deals. The growth area is management buy-outs and institutional buyouts.

Mr Stevens estimated that private equity investors are still sitting on £5 billion for which they have yet to find suitable investments. KPMG is optimistic about the buyout market but does not expect a full recovery until at least the middle of next year.



Roger North, chief executive, and Martin Coles, finance director of Ushers, saw an offer of finance withdrawn

Fleming denies bid approach

Robert Fleming, the independent investment bank, yesterday denied it had received a £3 billion offer from Commerzbank, the third largest German bank.

A spokesman for Fleming said the bank had not held talks with anyone, let alone received a takeover approach. A report had suggested that a rift had developed between John Manser, the chairman, and the Fleming family over a £22 a share bid by the German bank. The Fleming family has 30 per cent of the shares.

Thomson purchase Thomson Travel Group has paid £20 million to acquire Air Travel Group from Granada. Air Travel trades as Magic of Italy, Magic of Spain and Portugal, Magic of France and Magic of Cities. In its last year, it carried more than 200,000 passengers and made a pre-tax profit of £1 million on sales of £79 million.

Identica merger Identica Partnership, the brand consultancy formed by Michael Peters, is planning to merge with Tango Design, part of Bartle Bogle Hegarty, the advertising group. BBH will take a 21 per cent stake in Identica, which will continue to operate independently.

Tax powers questioned

REGULATIONS on the complex transition to self-assessment for companies could give the Inland Revenue wide-ranging powers to fine businesses that fail to pay the correct tax, accountants have cautioned (Robert Lea writes).

At issue are the provisions that allow the Revenue to exercise "penalty powers" on any company which "deliberately or recklessly fails" to pay the

right amount at the right time. The new corporation tax regime is already in existence for companies with profits in excess of £15 million a year, whose financial year started after July 2, this year.

Such companies are now expected to account for and pay their tax on a quarterly basis - previously they paid one lump sum nine months after the end of the financial year.

The complex administrative load is exacerbated by a big cashflow burden in the regime's transitional period, which effectively means companies will pay five years' worth of tax in four years.

Underpayment or late payment will automatically incur interest charges but, in its latest statement, there remains a wide definition of the Revenue's powers.

Ladbroke eyes Hiltons

LADBROKE GROUP is to use some of the proceeds from the sale of the Coral book-making chain to bolster its Hilton hotel business in the UK (Dominic Walsh writes).

The hotel and gaming group has drawn up a list of hotel assets that would fit its four-star Hilton National brand and is in advanced discussions on a number of possible acquisitions. The hotels it wants are

understood to include the White House Hotel, just off London's Marylebone Road, and the Ashford International in Kent. Together, the properties are worth an estimated £60 million to £70 million.

Ladbroke's decision to start buying assets rather than focusing on management contracts is designed to step up the profits growth from its Hilton arm. A Ladbroke source said:

"We're in the position of having the funds available and where the returns make sense, which was probably not the case a few months ago, we will look at buying assets. You are buying instant profits." Its move will be given a further boost by the imminent disposal of Coral for an estimated £390 million - a sharp uplift on the £363 million it paid for the business just a year ago.

Fight for Blockleys focuses on families

By ADAM JONES

THE two families that founded Blockleys will this week be centre stage in the battle to take over the Shropshire brick-maker. The board of Blockleys has rejected an all-share hostile takeover bid worth £13 million from Natural Building Materials (NBM), a rival listed on the Alternative Investment Market.

However, NBM has received acceptances representing worth 40.8 per cent of Blockleys shares and is now intensifying its efforts to persuade the founding Blockley and Wright families to sell their stakes, worth about 8 per cent of the company.

Neither of the families has any executive role in the company. The first deadline for acceptance of the offer is on Christmas Eve. Blockleys shares traded as high as 60 1/2p in the spring, before falling to 31p in October. They are now 40 1/2p.

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Table with columns for Country, Buy, Sell, and various financial metrics. Includes entries for Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, USA, etc.

Large financial table with columns for High, Low, Bid, Offer, Price, Change, % Change, and P/E. Lists numerous companies and their stock prices.

Advertisement for 'THE TIMES QUEEN'S COUNSEL III - LAYING DOWN THE LAW'. Includes a cartoon illustration of a woman with a gavel, promotional text, and a coupon form for ordering the book.

السنة الثالثة

Market capitalisation: £5.5 billion.
Pre-tax profits for 1997: £455.7 million.
Activities: predominately provides mortgages and savings accounts, but also offers unit trusts, life insurance, general insurance and some personal lending.
Shares: Year high, 395 1/4p; low, 315p; now, 352p.
Employees: 6,085, all but 282 of them in the UK.

John Stewart, chief executive, was elevated to the top of the company less than two years ago after the exit of Peter Robinson, who first applied the term carpetbaggers to speculators who opened building society accounts in the expectation of a windfall. Mr Stewart, formerly director of operations, was the only serious internal candidate, although Woolwich did look outside. Six months after Woolwich's flotation, Mr Stewart invited three new non-executive directors on to the board. They included Stephen Russell, managing director of Boots, and David Ure, director responsible for corporate marketing and technical policy at Reuters. The third is John Mellon, the investment banker who is leaving his post of chairman of Lazard to join Credit Suisse First Boston. Woolwich's group finance director, Robert Jeays, came from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the investment bank, although his roots are in accountancy and he was for many years with Touche Ross. Also a big noise from the world of accountancy is the non-executive chairman, Sir Brian Jenkins. Other notables include the non-executive directors Lord Barrie, who was the Director-General of Fair Trading for 16 years, and Sir Peter Gregson, the former Permanent Secretary at the Department of Trade and Industry. Woolwich is also one of the few FTSE 100 companies to boast a female executive director — Lynne Peacock, who is in charge of group operations.

Woolwich has lent money to homebuyers for more than 150 years, for the most part as a building society. Last year, it floated on the stock market and entered the FTSE 100 along with two of its former peers in the mutual sector. The timing of its conversion has not been ideal. Woolwich — famed for one of the best-known advertising catchphrases of the 1970s: "We're with the Woolwich" — has opened itself up to the scrutiny of the City at the very point at which its core business, the mortgage market, has begun to show signs of significant erosion. For three decades, building societies grew fat on the housing market as Britain was transformed from a nation of owner-occupiers. Economists estimate the building societies enjoyed 8 per cent compound growth per year from the early 1960s. Now the mortgage market has run out of steam. Lending volumes are forecast to fall in real terms over the next few years, while a sustained period of low interest rates has put a firm squeeze on the profit margins of banks and building societies alike. Woolwich's main market is contracting. To compound the bank's problems, a number of outsiders have entered the market with cheaper products. Unencumbered by expensive branch networks, Direct Line, Standard Life and Egg (a subsidiary of Prudential) are wooing existing borrowers with loan rates far below the conventional offerings. Woolwich, with a market capitalisation of £5.4 billion and a 5 per cent market share, is one of the smaller converts and so not in a position to cut prices and rely on volumes to see it through this difficult stage. Instead, the bank recognises it needs to find alternative income streams, and fast. Halifax, which faces the same dilemma but on a larger scale, is attempting to achieve this end by diversification: building a treasury operation and expanding its life insurance and investment business. This is a course tried and tested by Abbey National, the first convert in 1989. The response of John Stewart, Woolwich's chief executive, is arguably more radical. He is seeking to reposition the bank as primarily a distributor of packaged financial services, rather than a manufacturer of loans, and follows the US example

CORPORATE PROFILE: Woolwich



With the Woolwich: clockwise, from top left, are John Stewart, left, who has strong board approval for the Open Plan account, and Sir Brian Jenkins; David Ure; Stephen Russell; a Woolwich removal van; a house sold through the Woolwich; and John Nelson, a non-executive director

where the stages of mortgage lending are divided into distinct industries. Mr Stewart, who took the helm after the abrupt departure of Peter Robinson amid allegations of improper use of company expenses, acknowledges that it requires a huge culture change simply to give Woolwich a chance of achieving this goal. "We are past the point of no return, but there is a long way to go yet," he admits. His first task has been to re-shape Woolwich so that any of the conflicts common to larger banks have been eliminated. Businesses have been structured by product line, rather than process, but common services such as underwriting of risk have been teased out and stretched across the organisation. Not only does this save costs, but it also prevents fiefdoms from springing up, Mr Stewart says. Staff, too, have had to be re-

educated. In a particularly controversial move, Woolwich made most employees reapply for their own jobs. Inevitably, some left, while others were moved elsewhere within the bank after admitting that they were unhappy in their former roles. Remuneration has also been revised to put the emphasis on personal performance. "We had a mediocrity, not a meritocracy. Staff were paid the same regardless of their performance and they all received the same bonus," says Mr Stewart. Now the annual bonus is linked to personal performance: in theory, branch managers can earn bonuses

equivalent to 100 per cent of their salary, while branch clerks can take home as much as 25 per cent. Looking forward, Woolwich also intends to reduce its branch network — administrative processes have already been stripped out — as alternative forms of distribution such as the telephone, Internet and digital television grow in popularity. Multi-distribution is a favoured phrase of Mr Stewart. But crucial to the distribution strategy is a radical improvement in cross-selling. At present, banks sell on average about 1.5 different products to a single customer. For largely historical reasons, the British public prefer to take their mortgage from a building society and their pension from a life insurance company, and remain deaf to the entreaties of bancassurance. If Woolwich can break beyond two products per customer, its profitability would receive an immediate boost.

To this end, Mr Stewart aims to harness technology more effectively so that the bank may learn more about individual customers, identifying their wants and selling to needs, rather than just pushing products with little or no idea of whether the customer already has a mortgage, a credit card or a personal loan. With such information, he believes it is possible to offer a packaged service rather than discrete products. The first fruit of this strategy has been the release of Open Plan. This is a variable-rate mortgage that comes with a current account, a credit card, a cheque book and the offer of a personal loan. Customers can draw down money against their mortgage at far lower interest rates than are available from conventional sources. In retailers' parlance, buy three products for the price of two. Open Plan, says Mr Stewart, will enable Woolwich to

increase its share of the mortgage market without affecting interest margins, while cannibalising the personal loans and credit card businesses of its rivals. Woolwich can pursue this strategy purely because it has only a small personal lending business, whereas the operations of its fellow convert and near cousin Alliance & Leicester and the conventional banks are large. The initial pilot of Open Plan has been encouraging, says Mr Stewart. A nationwide roll-out is expected sooner rather than later, with other product lines added on a staggered basis. But Mr Stewart is candid about the risks of the strategy: if Open Plan fails to gain market share for the Woolwich, the bank's chances of remaining an independent player are fairly slim. His biggest fear is that somebody else will beat him to it, a dread that banking analysts suggest is well-founded. John Aitken, senior banking analyst with Rabobank, believes all of the mortgage banks and building societies will pursue a similar strategy so that they can build on their chief asset: their database of mortgage customers. New entrants are attempting to offer a similar product too. Last week, Standard Life Bank said it would enter the mortgage market in January with a variable rate of 6.8 per cent, undercutting all the established players. Takers of its Freestyle mortgage will also be able to draw down personal loans, so long as they have at least 10 per cent equity in their homes. The board is backing Mr Stewart to the hilt on Open Plan. Should it fail, they and the Woolwich could find themselves in the arms of a generous suitor.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

"Open Plan is a very good response to the threat of lower interest rates. It is the kind of product customers will like, and it won't cannibalise Woolwich's own business. What the Woolwich needs is a bit of time to develop these products over the next five years."
 Hugh Pye, of Robert Fleming

"All the mortgage banks, even on a mid-term view, are in deep trouble. They have to move rapidly to acquire other income streams. It is not run or die for Woolwich, but it will just get harder and harder as its market share is eroded. It is likely to be one of the searchers for a partner."
 John Aitken, of Rabobank

RICHARD MILES

OUR VERDICT

Ethical expression	5/10
Fat-cat quotient	9/10
Financial record	5/10
Share performance	5/10
Attitude to staff	7/10
Strength of brand	6/10
Innovation	8/10
Annual report	7/10
City star rating	5/10
Future prospects	5/10
Total	63/100

Ethical expression is evaluated by Integrity Works. The fat-cat quotient, in which least bottom-line pay practices scores highest, is provided by Crisp Consulting.

DESTINATIONS. COUNTRIES. (AND YOU THINK YOU TRAVEL A LOT.)

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The year of living dangerously

Economic historians may come to see 1998 as a watershed year. It marks the transition point from inflation to deflation and the emergence of real panic about the stability of the international monetary system.

Not that this was all clear as the year began. At that time, most commentators focused on the prospects for higher interest rates. The US economy was booming and the debate in Britain was about overheating. Meanwhile, Europe was finally showing signs of real recovery. Admittedly, several Asian countries had recently been battered by a severe financial crisis, but those economies were only tiddlers. By contrast, China was determined both to hold its exchange rate and to grow by 8 per cent.

As this year draws to a close, how different the world looks. Concern about overheating and inflation has given way to worry about recession and even deflation. The ramifications of the Asian crisis have continued to spread, while Japan is still not on the road to recovery. China is discovering that you cannot achieve economic growth simply by forecasting it — although regional officials may need some re-education on this point. Meanwhile, the

European recovery looks as though it is stalling and the British economy is falling towards recession. The US is still powering ahead but looks increasingly fragile. Everywhere you turn, still lower interest rates are on the cards.

But perhaps this year's greatest change has been in attitudes to the financial system. It has been a year of revelations. It is now clear that we live in a truly global economic system. Events in Thailand can end up by shaking the whole world. Moreover, in 1998 we came to realise how credulous the financial markets had been about the emerging economies and how they had grossly underestimated the importance of sound institutions. The Russian default shook them out of their complacency, but it also rammed home the message that when a borrower has debts that large, it is the lender who has the problem.

In the process, we learnt how precarious our financial system is. The virtual collapse of Long Term Capital Management (surely someone deserves an award for that name) was an eye-opener. The sheer size of the exposure and the apparent feeling of being wrong in the first place. But it is to the bond markets that you should look for the real



ROGER BOOTLE

To cap it all, increasingly it seemed that the IMF was simply not cut out for the role of managing the system. There may be a case for having no IMF at all, as Milton Friedman has recently argued, but if you are going to have such an institution, then it surely has to have the financial resources commensurate with the financial muscle of modern financial markets.

Those markets continue to be a source of amazement. When equity markets crashed after the Russian default, it looked as though they were finally adjusting to a more sober valuation, but once central banks had administered a soothing dose of interest rate balm they rebounded, as though nothing had been wrong in the first place. But it is to the bond markets that you should look for the real

story. They now apparently believe not only that inflation will be very low but also that it may even turn negative. Even so, on Wall Street, many an equity analyst can still be found assuming that deflation remains firmly locked in its box — or that it isn't, then much lower bond yields will be good for equities anyway.

Among the scribblers, someone who has had an extremely good year is John Maynard Keynes. As the Japanese problem has seemed more and more intractable, and as deflationary forces have spread throughout the global economy, dog-eared copies of his *General Theory* have been dusted down and re-read with approval.

In the land of the living, Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Fed, has also had a good year, despite sharp criticism of the way he handled LTCM and the subsequent interest rate reductions. From the very beginning, he was acutely aware of the threat of deflation. At some stage, we are going to have to elevate him to a higher plane. "St Alan" does not sound quite right, but it at least conveys the right message. For miracles are what the world now seems to expect of him.

Some day soon his halo is

going to slip. I do not see how he is going to ease the stock market down. He feels that the inter-related dangers of a financial crash and deflation compel him to cut interest rates, while hoping that the drip feed of falling profits stories will cause stock prices to subside gently.

But when so many of the leading US stocks, particularly in the information technology sector, make hardly any profits anyway, yet still soar to untold heights, investors have learnt to disregard profits. Meanwhile, interest rate reductions are taken as the signal to drive stock prices higher. The result is to increase the severity of the eventual crash — which is precisely what Greenspan dreams.

Accordingly, if your Christmas stocking does not include any good new books this year, you should try to track down a copy of a good one published long ago — Galbraith's *The Great Crash*. That account of the events leading up to the stock market crash of 1929 has long been of interest to historians, but as the events of this past year unfolded, I found myself returning to it, and becoming alarmed as I recognised myself with its central theme — financial markets unhinged and a world flirting with disaster.

Safety doubts cast shadow over cruise ship expansion

Bigger vessels mean greater scrutiny for the maritime industry despite its good record, writes Peter Harrison

As thousands of Britons set off for Christmas cruises, the maritime industry is getting ready for what it sees as another potential boom. Larger and larger cruise ships are being built, and, though the industry has an exemplary safety record, worries about what might happen if something goes wrong on these giant liners are starting to surface.

"How many ships would be needed to rescue 5,000 people? That was the question from Bill O'Neil, secretary-general of the UN's International Maritime Organisation, that sparked the debate. Mr O'Neil was, in effect, issuing a clear warning that safety technology may not have kept up with the swelling capacity of modern cruise ships.

The warning was almost restated last week, when the cruise liner *Monarch of the Seas* struck rocks as it left the Caribbean island of St Maarten.

The impact holed three of the ship's 18 watertight compartments. And although the ship was safely grounded, and the 2,557 passengers evacuated, it was "a very serious high-impact collision", according to sources involved in the operation.

Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, the operator, insists the beaching "was just a precautionary measure for the convenience of our guests". But the decision to beach the ship, rather than heading for the safety of the port only a quarter of a mile away, is the clearest indication that time was short and something was very wrong.

Disaster may have been averted, but Mr O'Neil's vision of a future *Titanic* disaster is disturbing. The industry is pushing for larger ships. Plans for the *America World City*, with its 6,200 passengers and 2,400 crew, may be on the back burner. But the industry's ob-

session with size means that ships like it will surely be built.

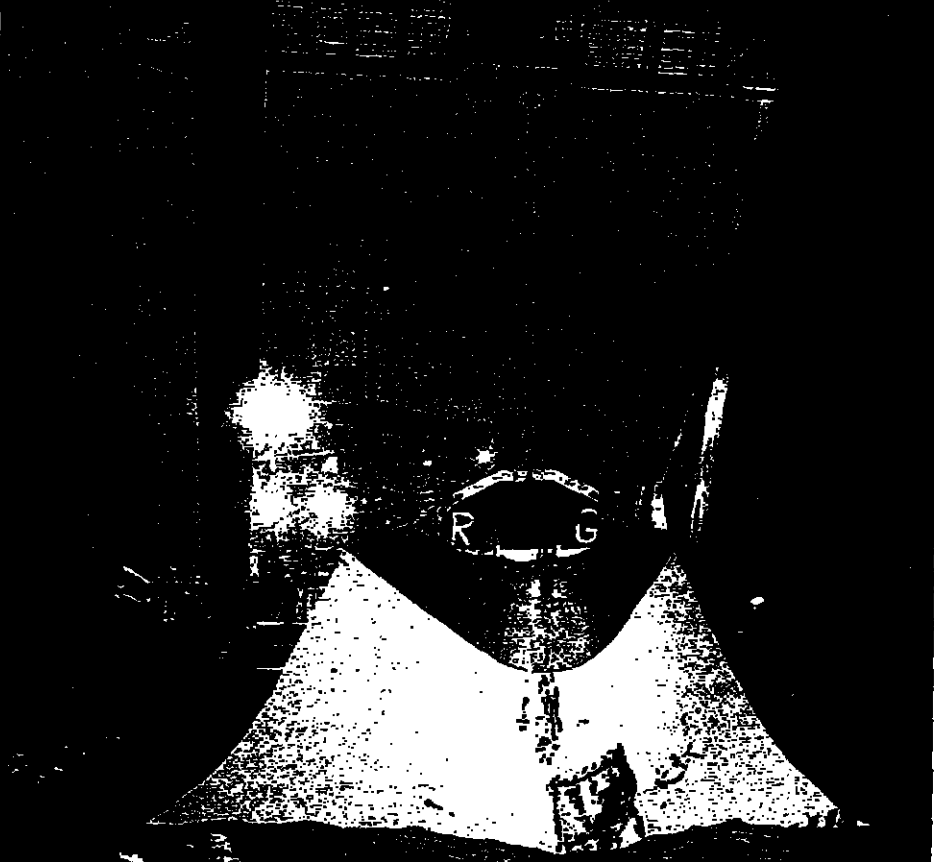
The *Estonia* disaster in 1994 illustrated the horrors of evacuating a ship in an emergency. True, the ferry developed a list extraordinarily quickly — but the fact remains that interior design was the real problem. What else could account for the deaths of 86 per cent of the passengers?

Once the list developed, corridors became vertical chasms, which could only be leapt by the fit and the young. But the biggest barrier to escape was the open foyer on deck four. The open area spanned the width of the ship, and had two main staircases, located at its centre, to create a grand visual effect. It is a feature shared by many cruise ships. As the list developed, the corridors, the foyers and the staircases all became insurmountable obstacles.

True, cruise ships cannot be compared to roll-on, roll-off ferries (ro-ros). Cruise ships lack the vast, internal car-deck space that makes ro-ros so vulnerable to loss of stability. Cruise ships are highly subdivided, and have much higher bulkhead decks, so they do not sink so quickly. But cruise ships still have many open spaces, and accidents always have and always will happen.

Mr O'Neil questions the current rules, which require ships to be able to evacuate all passengers and crew within 30 minutes. "It's 30 minutes long enough to launch survival craft on ships carrying 4,000? These are not sealiners. They are people on holiday." This statistic is brought into focus by a bit of arithmetic. Assuming we are hoping to save the crew as well, more than 5,000 people need to be brought off in that half hour.

This means about three people a second. Admiral William Kime, former head of marine safety for the US Coast Guard,



The bow door of the stricken ferry *Estonia* is lifted from the bed of the Baltic Sea

feels that safety is already being adequately addressed in cruise ship design. But he admits: "There have been few safety innovations in lifeboat design and function since the *Titanic*."

Cruise vessels may be more stable than ro-ros, but their internal design is less well governed. The International Solas convention recommends that on ro-ros "escape routes shall be evaluated by an evacuation analysis, early in the design process". Mr O'Neil is keen for these regulations to be extended to cover the cruise industry.

John McNeice, a cruise ship interior designer, is also keen to see evacuation modelling developed: "Queuing studies are already performed, so evacuation studies would not be particularly onerous."

And no matter how efficient evacuation procedures, this only addresses half the problem. "Getting people off the ship is merely removing them from the source of immediate danger," one seafarer said. "It's not the same as taking them to a place of safety. The sea itself can be a greater killer."

One passenger here left the vessel, survival depends on how quickly other vessels could reach the scene of the accident. In the case of the *Estonia*, ten commercial vessels took part in the rescue, alongside 17 helicopters, and numerous coastguard vessels. Between them, the ships managed to rescue 34 of the 232 passengers known to have escaped the sink-

ing ship. As with the *Titanic*, the tragedies of the *Scandinavian Star*, the *Herald of Free Enterprise* and the *Estonia* all led to improvements in safety. "But why did these accidents have to happen before the shipping world noticed something was wrong?" Mr O'Neil asked.

The industry argues that it is mindful of the problems. Gwyn Hughes, managing director of P&O Cruises, argues that the exemplary safety record of cruise liners has been taken into account. The shipping industry is not complacent. But many feel now is the time to take a serious look at cruise ship safety, before the next generation of ships is built, rather than after.

Peter Harrison is staff editor of *Fairplay Shipping Weekly*

Taming of the wild west

The West
BBC2, 2.30pm

Hidden away in the early afternoon is this superb eight-part documentary on the settlement of the American West. It comes from Ken Burns, the producer who masterminded an equally distinguished television history of the American Civil War which was shown on the BBC in the late 1990s. The West is presented in the same style, drawing as far as possible on contemporary sources, diaries and letters, paintings, photographs and music. Today's historians add their gloss. Programme one runs from 1800 to 1806 and its theme is how the original inhabitants of the American continent found their land and culture being violated by the European and Asian conquerors. The stirring commentary is appropriate to an epic tale.



A scene from an animated version of *The Canterbury Tales* (BBC2, 7.30pm)

Savvival Special: Web of the Spider Monkey
ITV, 4.40pm

The first of three wildlife films on successive days. In this unusual daytime slot, set in the Amazon rainforest and features one of its most distinctive inhabitants. The spider monkey is aptly named, being spidery in shape and covered with a thick black fur surprising for such a hot and humid climate. The creature spends its entire life high up in the canopy feeding on fruit. In this it is helped by having the longest prehensile tail in the world, which it wraps round a branch thus leaving its hands free to reach for food. The message of the film is that but for the spider monkey, and indeed other animal life, many of the trees in the rainforest would die. This is because in eating fruit they disperse seeds. But spider monkeys are under threat from deforestation and hunting and if they go, the trees will disappear too.

The Canterbury Tales
BBC2, 7.30pm

Geoffrey Chaucer is the source for the latest animation from the Anglo-Russian team that previously tackled such classics as the Bible and Shakespeare. This is a text that will commend itself to the literary purist. Squeezing *Hamlet* or *Othello* into half an hour meant losing most of Shakespeare's text and while *The Canterbury Tales* allows a little more space, three

tales per episode ensures a breathless pace. The images are the thing and the format allows plenty of approaches, with puppetry employed for the pilgrims and drawn animation for their stories. Tonight we hear from the Nun Priest, the Knight and the Wife of Bath and the tales include those of Bob Peck, Sean Bean and Billie Whitelaw. For those who find Jonathan Myerson's modern script too colloquial, a version using Chaucer's Middle English is being shown tomorrow.

Funny Women
BBC2, 9.50pm

Many of us first became aware of Stephanie Cole on *Tenko*, a prisoner of war drama and not exactly a barrel of laughs, but in recent years she has concentrated on comedy and fully justifies inclusion in this series. Her specialty has been playing women older than her years, a tradition which began in her days in repertory and was memorably continued as the crotchety Diana in *Waiting for God*. She always wanted to be an actor, was expelled from school for throwing a book at a Latin teacher who mocked her theatrical ambitions and has since become one of television's stalwarts. A *Paying Tribute* in this profile are Ned Sherrin, Jean Anderson from *Tenko*, David Haig from her latest sitcom *Keeping Mum*, Patricia Brake who was at drama school with her and her partner, the actor Peter Birrell. Peter Waymark

RADIO CHOICE

How to be Happy
Radio 4, 8.00pm

This is a really useful programme in that it enables the listener to shout rubbish at the radio from time to time: great therapy. Contributors include a novelist, a therapist, a neuroscientist, a couple who are piano tuners and 50 people gathered in a London hotel to hear a lecture by Ben Renshaw, who runs the Happiness Project (a title which was enough to make me laugh). There are no definitive conclusions, for no two people are made happy in the same way, but the historian Theodore Zeldin surely gets closest to a universal truth when he says that being happy comes from giving joy to others in order to get it back, a point implicitly made by some unhappy contributors, who come across as being self-obsessed.

Christmas Cocktails
Radio 3, 7.00pm

Several promising new programmes and series start today on Radio 3 and I mention this one not because of the seasonal topicality of the title but because the show is only topical in the sense that it features tunes with a Christmas flavour. The series runs every night this week and is a tribute to the swing bands of the 1930s, some of the most cheerful music in the catalogues and therefore a perfect antidote to Christmas shopping. Hal Kemp's *Siberian Sleigh Ride* is among the foot-tappers tonight, as is work by the bands of the brothers Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Chick Webb, Red Norvo and Jimmy Lunceford. The focus is necessarily American but there are contributions from Django Reinhardt. Peter Bannard

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Chris Moyles 8.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Kevin Greening 2.00pm Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Dave Pearce 6.00 Lorraine Lister 7.00 The Breakfast Show 12.00am Eoina 8.00 Scott Mills

BBC WORLD SERVICE

5.00am The World Today 7.00 News 7.15 On the Spot: Christmas Eve at the End of the Road 7.30 The Village Choir Show 8.00 News 8.10 Radio 4 Today 8.15 News 8.30 News (9.45 only) News in German 9.05 World Service Report 9.15 Record News 9.30 Westway Access 9.45 Sports Round-Up 10.00 Newsdesk 10.30 Omnibus 11.00 Newsdesk 11.30 Jazzmaster 12.00pm News 12.05 World Business Report 12.15 Britain Today 12.30 Seven Days 12.45 Sports Round-Up 1.00 Newshour 2.00 News 2.05 Outlook 2.30 Planet 2000 3.00 World News (9.45 only) News in German 3.05 News Roundup 3.15 Westway Access 3.30 Newsdesk 3.45 Outlook 4.00 News 4.15 Seven Days 4.30 Inside (9.45 only) News in German 4.45 Britain Today 5.00 Europe Today 5.30 World Business Report 5.45 Sports Roundup 6.00 Newsdesk 6.30 Four Faces (9.45 only) News in German 7.00 News Summary 7.01 Outlook 7.25 News 7.30 Thought 7.30 Multitrack HR List 8.00 Newshour 9.00 News 9.05 World Business Report 9.15 Britain Today 9.30 Tying the Knot 10.00 Newsdesk 10.30 Inside 10.45 Sports Round-Up 11.00 News 11.05 Outlook 11.15 Multitrack HR List 11.30 Newsdesk 12.30 Westway 12.45 Britain Today 1.00 Newsdesk 1.30 Seven Days 1.45 Wild Take 2.00 Newsday 2.30 On Screen 3.00 News 3.05 World Service Report 3.15 Sports Round-Up 3.30 The Greatest City on Earth 4.00 The World Today

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Alex Lester 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Ken Bruce 12.00 Jimmy Young 2.00pm Ed Stewart 6.00 Johnnie Walker 7.00 Andrew Linton 8.00 Big Band Christmas Special: Sheila Truitt introduces the BBC Big Band in a concert recorded at Birmingham's Symphony Hall, conducted by Barry Forgie 8.30 The New Jazz Standards 9.30 The Rock 'n' Roll Year 10.00 Matthew 10.50 Richard Ainsworth 12.00 Katrina Leschich 3.00pm Mo Duta

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Bailey's Easter Breakfast. Musical variety, plus regular information updates 8.00 Henry Kelly. The Hall of Fame and Record of the Week, plus carols chosen by listeners 12.00pm Lunchtime Request. Jane James reveals her favourite 1950s Concerto. Doherty/Variations on a Nursery Song 3.00 Jamie Cuck. Continuous Classics and Afternoon Romance 8.30 Newswright. John Drumming presents the finest stories 7.00 Smooth. Christmas. Two hours of soulful sounds 9.00 Evening Concert. Vaughan Williams' *Pastorale* Christmas Carols; Praetorius (Christmas Mass); Aron (Mistletoe Christmas Spontaneous) 11.00 *Man on Night*. Wind down with the sounds of ambient music 2.00am Concerto (1) 3.00 Mark Griffiths. The Early Breakfast Show

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 Breakfast with Julian Worlock and Annie Webster 8.00 Brian Hayes 12.00 The Midday News 1.00 Race and Go 4.00 Drive with Fear Allen and Jens Gerdner 7.00 News Exps. Presented by David Mitchell 7.30 The Whistle Blower. An insight into the life of a football referee 8.00 Trevor Bocking's Monday Match. Chelsea Athletic v Aston Villa 10.00 Late Night Live 1.00am Up All Nights

VIRGIN

6.00am Jeremy Clark 8.30 Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbott 4.00 Harriet Scott 6.45 Jane Lee Grace 10.00 James Marriot 2.00am Richard Allen

TALK RADIO

6.00am Bill Overton & Sally Mean 8.00 Scott Chisholm 12.00pm Graham Kelly 2.00pm Anne Pascoe 4.00 Peter Dealey 6.00 The Sports Zone 8.00 Mike Allen 1.00am Ian Collins

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air Petroc. Petroc discusses Opera. Next is a selection of Bizet's *Carmen* with the chorus of the Royal Opera House.

9.00 Masterworks includes Wagner (*Tannhauser*), Verdi (*Macbeth*), Puccini (*La Bohème*), and Verdi (*Macbeth*); Shostakovich (*Piano Concerto No 2*)

10.30 Artist of the Week: Margaret Price (1)

11.00 Sound Stories: The Christmas Story Richard Yentis tells the story of the Annunciation

12.00 Composer of the Week: Georges Bizet (1)

1.00pm The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert Lyndy Hamell, cello; Simon Mulligan, piano; Bach (*Cello Suite No 2*); D. B. Whitt (1928); Beethoven (*Cello Sonata in C, Op 102 No 1*)

2.00 The BBC Orchestra BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Tadeusz Struk and Thomas Dausgaard. Alexander Mackay, piano; Louise Winter, mezzo; Jeremy Hughes Williams, baritone

4.00 Dival — Montserrat Caballé new series. Natalie Whelan tells us four of this century's greatest divas

4.15 *Who's Got the Influence* or impressed them? (2)

4.45 Music to Die For: Bernard MacLaverly new series. Eight contemporary novelists ask their responses to a single moment in classical music

5.00 A Medieval Christmas New series. A 10-part collection of music for Christmas past and present

5.30 Music Rooms New series. Ten programmes in which Natalie Whelan is invited into the private rooms of a distinguished collection of music

6.00 Discovering Music with Leonard Slatkin New series. Ten daily programmes in which the conductor Leonard Slatkin and the BBC Philharmonia explore the language of music

7.00 Christmas Cocktails New series. See Choice 7.30 Performance on 3: Front the Proms 1998

Another chance to hear ten of the most memorable concertos of the 1930s. From the BBC Symphony Chorus and Orchestra under Andrew Davis. Elgar (*The Apostles*), with Felicity Lott, soprano; Charles Mackerras, conductor

9.40 Postscript The comedian and broadcaster Rainer Harsh presents five personal and idiosyncratic studies of the music of our century

10.00 *Wales 12.00* Five Irish songs and sings his favourite Christmas songs in conversation with Ian Burnside

10.45 *Wales 12.00* Five Irish songs and sings his favourite Christmas songs in conversation with Ian Burnside

11.30 Jazz Notes: Harry Edison reminisces about his work with Count Basie and Lucky Miller

12.00 Composer of the Week: Bach (1)

1.00am Through the Night with Donald Macleod

RADIO 4

5.30am World News 5.35 Shipping Forecast 5.40 Inshore Forecast 5.45 Prayer for the Day 5.47 Farming Today with Charlotte Smith

6.00 Today with Anne Ford and James Naughtie

6.08 Start the Week. Today's programme's guests include the biologist Professor Nancy Rothwell

9.30 *Carols for Choice* New series. Alastair Hume explores the history of four carols (1)

9.45 (FM) *Serials*: Scripps with Ianuscau Armando Iannuzzi puts the year in perspective

9.45 (FM) *Daily Service* From Dryden's Parish Church, Leicestershire, on the tenth anniversary of the air disaster

10.00 *Women's Hour* with Marina Kennedy and guests (1)

10.00 *Smashpop* from the New South Wales (1)

11.30 *My Galaxy* Gail Part two of John Pascoe's drama. George Edwards realises the Galaxy and grows the chorus girls to be ladies (2)

12.00 *Top Gear* 1998 Special. A 10-part series of news and investigations

12.00 (LW) *News Headlines*: Shipping Forecast

1.00 *The World at One* with Nick Clarke

1.30 *Top Gear* 1998 Special. A 10-part series of news and investigations

2.00 *The Archers* (1)

2.15 *Afternoon Play*: Margaret's Christmas by George Smeaton. Margaret investigates a title girl's claim to have seen Father Christmas

3.00 *Money Box Live*: 0171-880 4444 Vincent Duggan takes calls on personal finance

3.30 *Smashpop* The System New series. Simon Evans takes a humorous look at the systems governing life on Earth (1)

3.45 *Colonial City*: Master of Disguise Martin Jarvis visits 'Great Britain's tale about the mysticists Colonial City

RADIO 4

4.00 *The Food Programme* Andrew Jefford visits Cuba to discover the pleasures of rum (1)

4.00 *Turning World* Jani Murray and guests look at human interest stories from around the world

5.00 *Play* presented by Clare English and Chris Lowe

6.00 *Six O'Clock News*

6.30 *Ten Song* I Haven't a Clue from Cardiff's New Theatre. With Max Boyce, Barry Cryer, George Gair and the Cardiff Taylor. Chaired by Humphrey Lytton

7.00 *The Archers* 7.15 *Front Row* Francine Stock

7.45 *Under One Roof* Adapted by Sally Woodroffe from Michele Hanson's original stories

8.00 *How to be Happy* See Choice

8.30 *Wales 12.00* Five Irish songs and sings his favourite Christmas songs in conversation with Ian Burnside

9.00 *Historic A Walk to the North* — Fear Jim

9.30 *Start the Week* (1)

10.00 *The Western Tonight* with Robin Lusk

10.45 *Christmas Book* at Bedtime Patricia Routledge reads *Writer*, taken from Laura Lee & Cider with Rose (1)

11.00 *Radio 4 Appeal* (1)

11.02 *Late Night on 4*: Fatherland Aron Lester stars in the conclusion of Robert Harris's *Despatches* (1)

11.30 (FM) *Rebel Music* Second of two programmes focusing on the musical legacy of 1968 (1)

11.50 (LW) *Today in Parliament*

12.00 *Series* — *Smashing the Late Book*: Out of Her Columnist Lynne Truss, read by Michael Gough. A woman investigates a cozy Christmas crime, using each of her senses

12.48 *Shipping Forecast* 1.00 *As World Service*

RECRUITING FOR THE 21st CENTURY

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Graduate & Professional Recruitment Careers Fair

Friday 29th February 1999

9.00am - 7.00pm

The Business Centre, 100, Broad Street, London W1P 3HP

• Professional Career Development Seminars

• Opportunity to discuss Career Options with a wide range of employers

• CV Clinics to be conducted by leading recruitment specialists

• All your friends!

Admission to the Careers Fair is FREE WITH A CV

Answers from page 30

SHECHITA

(c) The Jewish method of slaughtering animals. The Hebrew verb means to slaughter. "Insofar as slaughter can be humane, shechita is humane — to the animal. It is, however, inhumane to the shochet, for he has to face the almost pleading eyes of the animal."

WANDEROBO

(a) The name of a nomadic hunting tribe of Kenya. The native name: "He was attacked by the men of the rain forest, the Wandero-bo."

SPROWSIE

(c) Sixpence. A sixpenny piece. Probably a variant of sprazer, sixpence. Coins create cant and slang. "I walked across to the record player and took some stiver out of my pocket. 'Half-Nelson, do me a favour and put a sprowsie in there for me. I've got no change."

UMWELT

(c) The outer world, or reality, as it affects the organisms inhabiting it. The German word for the environment. "The various species of ants are generally similar to the honeybee in their Umwelt."

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE

1 dQd; 2 Qf7+ and White wins.

CHANGE ON WEEK

US Dollar
1.6816 (-0.0006)

German Mark
2.7982 (+0.0163)

Exchange Index
100.7 (+0.3)

Bank of England official close (4pm)

FT 30 share
3457.1 (+95.7)

FTSE 100
5741.9 (+200.2)

New York Dow Jones
8908.78 (+87.02)

Tokyo Nikkei Ave
14194.29 (-211.35)

FREQUENCY GUIDE: RADIO 1 FM 97.9-98.5; **RADIO 2** FM 88.0-90.2; **RADIO 3** FM 90.2-92.4; **RADIO 4** FM 92.4-94.8; **LW 196**; **MW 720**; **RADIO 5 LIVE** MW 693, 905; **World Service** MW 158 (12.45-5.55am); **CLASSIC FM** FM 100-102; **VIRGIN RADIO** FM 105.3; **MW 1197**; **1216**; **TALK RADIO** MW 1081, 1089. Television and radio listings compiled by Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McNamee.

Ow you say, entertainment, n'est-ce pas?

I blame the Spice Girls. All costume dramas now have a feisty female heroine...

licts of principle and the ambiguity interplay between personal passion, religious conviction and affairs of state...

How To Cook A Romantic Novel. Add in mysterious slightly menacing servants, pursuing a secret agenda...

Tara Fitzgerald is a beautiful and sensual heroine, but refreshingly, not in the conventional way of a model or other miscellaneous glamour-puss...

Review by Paul Hoggart. As HTV West except. 9.30-9.35am Central News (5279518)...

charming and completely ludicrous. People come from miles around to admire it.

a recreation of a druidic rite, apparently, but that didn't stop it being revolting to watch as it slithered down with a clammy splootch.

- BBC1 6.00am Business Breakfast (65315) 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (199688) 9.00 Children's BBC: Sweet Valley High (7847044) 9.25 The Fame Game (7840131) 9.55 Teletubbies (9004313) 10.20 News; Regional News; Weather (1) (8405841) 10.30 An American Tail: Fievel Goes West (1991) Animated sequel to Steven Spielberg's 1986 blockbuster chronicling the further adventures of the Mousekewitz family...

- BBC2 7.00am Children's BBC: Wiggy Park (9078888) 7.05 Teletubbies (5082131) 7.30 Yogi's Treasure Hunt (1914518) 7.50 Blue Peter (8970191) 8.20 East the Cat (8149082) 8.35 Taz-Mania (8957386) 9.00 Animal Winter Warmers (2342286) 12.30am The Simpsons (2481247) 12.50 The Simpsons (2485063) 1.15 The Simpsons (1) (1) (5893082) 1.40 Timewatch Another chance to examine the evidence that Hitler had already decided against an invasion of Britain before the RAF's victory in the 1940 Battle of Britain (1) (1) (8180773) 2.30 The West West chronicles the colonisation of the American West (1) (2342605) 3.55 News; Regional News; Weather (1) (904957) 4.00 The Horse Soldiers (1959) A Union cavalry officer is ordered to demolish a railway junction in the middle of Confederate territory...

- HTV 5.30am ITN Morning News (46637) 6.00 GMTV (1021421) 6.25 ITN News (4371150) 6.30 HTV News (1) (5279518) 9.35 CTV: House of Toons: Tiny Toon Adventures (1947995) 10.00 Rocky and the Dodos (3331696) 10.15 Art Attack Christmas Cracker (7237173) 10.40 Digby, the Biggest Dog in the World (1973) A sheepsdog gulps down a scientist's secret growth formula and mushrooms to colossal proportions...

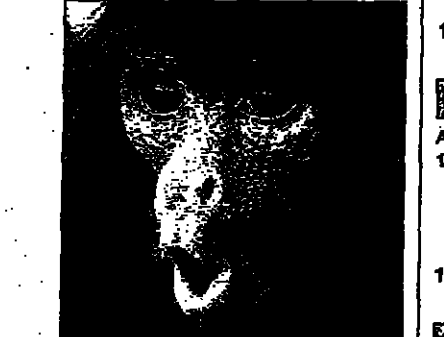
- CENTRAL As HTV West except. 9.30-9.35am Central News (5279518) 12.20-12.30pm Central News; Weather (6703063) 1.00-1.30 Echo Point (87044) 2.35-2.40 Central News (6993686) 6.00 Beadle's Hot Shots (400421) 6.25-7.00 Central News; Weather (698315) 10.50-11.00 Central News; Weather (180781) 11.55am Central Jobfinder '98 (12224283) 5.30-5.55 Box Office America (9842396) WEST COUNTRY As HTV West except. 9.30am Westcountry News (5279518) 9.35-9.35am Birthday People (5279518) 12.15-12.27pm Westcountry News; Weather (3404599) 12.27-12.30 Carols for Christmas (6711082) 1.00 A Step in Faith (87044) 1.30-2.00 Emerald (29957) 2.35-2.40 Westcountry News; Weather (6993686) 6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (38605) 10.50-11.00 Westcountry News; Weather (180781) MERIDIAN As HTV West except. 12.15-12.30pm Meridian News; Weather (3404599) 1.00-1.30 Hope and Gloria; 6.00 Meridian Tonight (792) 8.30-7.00 Streetwise (604) 10.50-11.00 Meridian News; Weather (180781) ANGLIA As HTV West except. 12.15pm Anglia Air Watch (6782670) 12.20-12.30 Anglia News and Weather (6703063) 1.00-1.30 Dinosaurs (87044) 5.30-5.40 Anglia Air Watch (143624) 6.00 Beadle's Hot Shots (400421) 6.25-7.00 Anglia News (698315) 10.49 Anglia Air Watch (415678) 10.50-11.00 Anglia News and Weather (180781) SES As HTV West except. Starts 6.00am Sesame Street (21260131) 7.00 Ovide (46020063) 7.30 The Magic School Bus (46009670) 8.00 The Big Breakfast (2162518) 10.00 The Bigger Breakfast Saved by the Bell (655029) 10.30am Earle, Indiana (1) (71510315) 10.55 No Balls Allowed (10331599) 11.30 Moesha (1) (49723179) 12.00pm Madison (64812608) 12.30 Right to Reply (1) (18650745) 1.00 Planned Parenthood (1) (46029341) 1.30 Garden Doctors (9/11) (1) (19002026) 2.00 Personal Services (1) (11234322) 6.00 Newydd (1) (1) (19864266) 6.10 Hano (1) (80594421) 7.00 Carols in Langolton (21866065) 8.00 Pwy Di Pwy? (1) (18667570) 8.30 Newydd (1) (18666065) 9.00 Chwedlau Caeraint (1) (49726598) 9.30 Sgwel (1) (18674511) 10.35 Frasier (1) (56770489) 11.35 The Outsiders with Nick Hancock (1) (74800773) 12.35am The Truth About Art (3/3) (1) (48257352) 1.35 Joe Public (1) (8078939) 2.05 Dwydd

- CHANNEL 4 5.10am Sharky and George (1) (7034860) 5.35 Two Stupid Dogs (1) (9872537) 6.00 Sesame Street (11353) 7.00 Ovide (86315) 7.30 The Magic School Bus (1) (98150) 8.00 The Big Breakfast (77179) 10.00 The Bigger Breakfast; Saved by the Bell (70265) 10.30 Earle, Indiana (1) (7) (9995808) 10.55 No Balls Allowed Sport (4347150) 11.30 Moesha (1) (712) 12.00 Madison (92315) 12.30pm The Bishop's Wife (1947) An angel comes down to Earth to help to reunite a cleric and his wife, and raise money for a new church Festival Fantasy, starring Cary Grant and David Niven. Directed by Henry Kostler (1) (85792) 2.30 Frances Bessell's West Country Christmas Presented by the Times cook (1/2) (1) (1) (605) 3.00 Wine Hunt New series. Matthew Julius challenges two teams of amateur wine buffs to test their knowledge of Medoc and St Emilion (1/6) (1) (9599) 3.30 Tool Stories New series of inspirational DIY projects presented by George Herbert (1/6) (1) (150) 4.00 Fifteen-to-One Highlights (1) (957) 4.00 Countdown (1) (9548860) 4.55 Monty Williams (1) (1874315) 5.30 Pet Rescues Awards The first of three special programmes celebrating some of the remarkable animals and people from the past series (1/3) (1) (421) 6.00 Roseanne (1) (1) (334) 6.30 Hollyoaks (1) (686) 7.30 Channel 4 News; Weather (1) (4808) 7.30 Undercover Britain A woman whose mother was killed by a drink driver confronts those who consume large amounts of alcohol and then take to the road (1) (570) 8.00 The Iceberg Cometh Investigation into the danger posed by icebergs (1) (5624) 9.00 Brookside Christmas Special Will Ron help Bev get Josh back? (1) (7976) Johnny Depp stars as a somewhat confused young man (10.30pm) 10.30 Don Juan de Marco (1998) Premiere. A psychotherapist postpones his retirement to analyse a man suffering from an intriguing delusion. Romantic drama, with Marlon Brando and Johnny Depp. Directed by Jeremy Leven (1) (27934302) 12.15am Arizona Dream (1999) Quirky comedy about a drifter's adventures with the bizarre folk he meets in his uncle's home town. Johnny Depp, Jerry Lewis and Faye Dunaway star. Directed by Emir Kusturica (1) (35672174) 2.50 The Woman in the Window (1944) A woman's recollection of her husband's murder proves fateful as she involves him in an elaborate murder and blackmail plot. Starring Edward G. Robinson. Directed by Fritz Lang (453377) 4.40 Real World (1) (13099613)

- CHANNE 6.00am 5 News and Sport (6196792) 7.00 Wimpie's House (1) (6956179) 7.30 Milkshake! (296179) 7.35 HavaKazoo (1) (6150082) 8.00 George of the Jungle (1) (7561334) 8.30 What-a-Mess (1) (7560605) 9.00 Loggerheads (1) (7551957) 9.30 USA High (1) (2181315) 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (90639792) 10.20 Sunset Beach Annie offers to help Maria (1) (8746583) 11.10 Lezza (1) (8437063) 12.00 5 News at Noon (1) (7564421) 12.30pm Family Affairs (1) (1) (2185131) 1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful Jack-ines to bride Clark (1) (6948150) 1.30 Sons and Daughters Patricia makes a decision about Martin (1) (84402) 2.00 100 Per Cent Gold (1465082) 2.30 Good Afternoon (2138557) 3.30 BabyCakes (TVM 1998) Richi Lake stars in this romantic comedy as a lonely, overweight woman who sets out to capture the man of her dreams, zeroing in on hunky Craig Shaffer. Directed by Paul Schneider (1) (7587044) 5.20 The Roseanne Show (9061976) 6.00 Family Affairs (1) (2390421) 6.30 Family Affairs Pete and Claire celebrate their good fortune (1) (2381773) 7.00 5 News (1) (1436570) 7.30 Wild at Home Documentary about the Royal Bird of Britain, the swan; (1) News Update (2387957) 8.00 Floyd Undercover Jonathan Peadley looks into the production of champagne and recounts the history of the booze-loving monk Dom Perignon, while Keith Floyd serves up a meal of crayfish cooked in a caviar and saffron champagne sauce. Last in series (8/8) (1) (1452518) 8.30 Weather Front Kate Ledger, Paul Simons and Chris Thorncroft shed a little sunlight on the world of meteorology and take bets on a white Christmas. (3/8) (1) 5 News Update (1464353) 9.00 Lonesome Dove Part three. Jake discovers the truth about the Suggs brothers' murderous ways Western adventure, starring Robert Duvall, Tommy Lee Jones, Frederic Forrest, Robert Iler and Angela Heston. (3/4) (1) 5 News Update (5881841) 10.50 Lap Dancer (TVM 1995) A woman turns to erotic dancing to make ends meet. With Elizabeth Wagner Directed by Arthur Elgort (89578976) 12.15am NFL American Football - Live Denver Broncos at Miami Dolphins. Mark Webster and Mike Carlson introduce all the action from tonight's crucial East V West AFC clash at the Pro Player Stadium (33431377) 4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H (1467913) 5.30 100 Per Cent (1) (7020342)



Paul Hoggart



A spider monkey of the Amazon rain forests (4.40pm)



Johnny Depp stars as a somewhat confused young man (10.30pm)



Frederic Forrest stars in the award-winning mini-series (9pm)

- For further listings see Saturday's Vision SKY 8.00am Games World (46150) 8.30 Star Trek: Voyager (45421) 9.00 The Simpsons (84772) 9.30 EastEnders (1) (1) (8405841) 10.00 The Simpsons (84772) 10.30 The Simpsons (84772) 11.00 The Simpsons (84772) 11.30 The Simpsons (84772) 12.00 The Simpsons (84772) 12.30 The Simpsons (84772) 1.00 The Simpsons (84772) 1.30 The Simpsons (84772) 2.00 The Simpsons (84772) 2.30 The Simpsons (84772) 3.00 The Simpsons (84772) 3.30 The Simpsons (84772) 4.00 The Simpsons (84772) 4.30 The Simpsons (84772) 5.00 The Simpsons (84772) 5.30 The Simpsons (84772) 6.00 The Simpsons (84772) 6.30 The Simpsons (84772) 7.00 The Simpsons (84772) 7.30 The Simpsons (84772) 8.00 The Simpsons (84772) 8.30 The Simpsons (84772) 9.00 The Simpsons (84772) 9.30 The Simpsons (84772) 10.00 The Simpsons (84772) 10.30 The Simpsons (84772) 11.00 The Simpsons (84772) 11.30 The Simpsons (84772) 12.00 The Simpsons (84772) 12.30 The Simpsons (84772) 1.00 The Simpsons (84772) 1.30 The 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SHIPSHAPE 38
Safety doubts
cast over liner
expansion

BUSINESS

YEAR END 38

Roger Bootle
looks back
on 1998



BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

MONDAY DECEMBER 21 1998

Outlook for jobs worst for five years

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

JOB prospects are the worst for five years and the trend looks similar to the recession in the early 1990s, according to the latest gloomy readings from the UK economy.

A survey of more than 2,000 companies by Manpower found "strong evidence that the economy is faltering". The employment agency said that job prospects had deteriorated across manufacturing and services as well as the public sector.

Separately, the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) has cut its growth forecast for the British economy which it now believes will see negative inflation — or falling prices — in 2002. This will increase pressure for further cuts in interest rates.

Doug McWilliams, the CEBR chief executive, said: "This will be a new world for most people working today who have spent their entire working lives in an inflationary environment. In the future we will no longer be able to think in terms of annual rounds of wage and price increases."

Manpower's survey shows that, for the first three months of next year, 16 per cent of em-

ployers are predicting an increase in job levels with the same percentage expecting a decrease. The agency said this represents the sharpest fall in job prospects since 1991: a year ago, 10 per cent more companies were expecting to increase employment levels than were predicting to cut jobs.

The CEBR forecasts negative growth of 0.1 per cent for the economy next year, a revision downwards from the 0.4 per cent predicted in September. It said that it was now more pessimistic because consumer confidence had weakened more than expected and recent figures had indicated that unsold stocks were higher than expected. This compares with the Treasury's forecast of growth in 1999 of about 1 per cent, a judgment shared by the Bank of England.

The CEBR argued that de-stocking will depress growth over the next two years, with manufacturing industry contracting by 2.9 per cent in 1999 and growth in services slowing almost to a standstill.

It forecast that unemployment would increase by half a million by 2002.

Stagnant growth will mean

sharply lower UK base rates. The CEBR forecasts that base rates will fall to below 3 per cent in 2001 and to below 2.5 per cent the following year.

However, GfK, the company that compiles consumer confidence surveys for the EU, said Britain was in danger of talking itself into a "hyped recession".

It said British consumers remain confident about their own finances but have been battered into pessimism about the outlook for the economy by "excessively gloomy media reports".

GfK's latest survey shows that confidence overall dipped back in December, having recovered in November. However, within the headline confidence level, GfK has again found a deep split between people's confidence about their own prospects, which remains quite high, and confidence in the outlook for the broader economy which has collapsed.

Based on its latest findings, GfK said consumer spending could be higher next year than current forecasts and that the economy overall could grow by 2 per cent. However, 63 per cent of those polled predicted a rise in joblessness next year.



Lord Simpson, GEC's managing director, is believed to want to join forces with a US company, although a wholesale merger with BAe would create a £23 billion company

GEC board to discuss BAe tie-up

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH AEROSPACE and GEC this week enter a critical stage in the talks that could lead to the first large-scale consolidation in the European defence industry.

GEC's board is expected to hold an emergency meeting today, amid signs that Daimler-Chrysler Aerospace (Dasa) is pressing BAe for a quick decision on their proposed merger.

GEC's last-minute intervention threatens to scupper the BAe/Dasa deal. Contributing to its Marconi division in the proposed tie-up is believed to be unpopular with Daimler-Chrysler because it would dilute the German group's holding in the merged entity.

Another alternative for GEC would be a wholesale merger with BAe, a move that would create a company worth £23 billion. Both companies are in intense negotiations with each other and with the Government, which would need to approve a merger.

The Government has been a strong advocate of consolidation in European aerospace and defence in order to make European companies better able to compete with the defence giants of the US. But it is thought that the Government would prefer to involve Dasa in any GEC/BAe initiative.

A full merger between BAe

and GEC would complete a deal which has been a source of constant speculation as the world aerospace market has consolidated. Europe faces tough pressure from the US. Although it is more difficult for European companies to converge, governments are moving increasingly in support of cross-border ties.

BAe's plans to merge with Dasa would have created cost savings of nearly £300 million, analysts believe. These would mainly have come from joining their production of the Eurofighter — the four-nation European combat aircraft. The Eurofighter programme is worth £40 billion.

GEC may have to overcome boardroom spats to strike a merger with BAe. It has been suggested that Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, managing director, wants instead for the company to join forces with a US company. This year GEC bought Tracor, a US defence company, for £800 million. Big US defence names which GEC could be looking at include Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and Raytheon.

If Marconi was absorbed by BAe before it went on to merge with Dasa then GEC would not be left out of the equation, but BAe need not be concerned about its own interest being greatly diluted.

Newspaper war looming in London

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

AN OLD-FASHIONED newspaper war is about to break out in London as News International pushes ahead with plans to launch a new evening newspaper in the capital.

The new paper, which will be free, is expected to be launched early next year. It will be aimed at the classified advertising base of the

Evening Standard, owned by Associated Newspapers, publisher of the *Daily Mail*.

News International, owner of *The Times*, has, it is believed, been planning the launch of a free evening newspaper for London for some time. Plans have now been accelerated by news that Associated is at work on a free daily for London, which would be distributed to morning commuters using the Tube. Associ-

ated is aiming for the morning to avoid cannibalising sales of its *Evening Standard*.

Richard Stott, former editor of the *Daily Mirror*, has been working on dummy issues of the News International publication, which will probably be partly financed by sponsorship money.

The sudden revival of competition in the London newspaper market is reminiscent of a decade ago, when Robert Max-

well launched the *Daily News* and the late Lord Rothermere, the *Standard* proprietor, revived, for a period, the *London Evening News* as a spoiler.

In 1986 News International talked of launching a new evening paper. The *London Post*, but it turned out to be a disguise for the dramatic move of its national titles away from Fleet Street to Wapping.

It is not clear what the News International free paper will

be called, but the *London Post* or *London Today* are obvious possibilities.

The economics of a new free London paper may be difficult, particularly going into an economic slowdown, but winning a slice of the capital's classified advertising, particularly recruitment, could be lucrative. Editorial costs would be relatively low because the paper could call on resources of a big news-gathering machine.

Windfalls on way as Australians win NPI

By ADAM JONES

A WINDFALL of at least £300 million will be paid next autumn to about 630,000 people who hold life assurance or pension policies issued by NPI, the British insurer that is being bought by AMP of Australia in a £2.7 billion deal.

NPI's longest-standing and highest-value policyholders will receive a further cash payment — worth thousands of pounds in some cases — to reflect their seniority.

Holders of with-profits policies, who number 440,000, will enjoy increased final payments when their policies mature. However, since some mature over 25 years, this will not be a quick "cash-in-hand" benefit. With-profits terminal payouts can also be hit by poor stock market conditions.

The deal with AMP, which has to be approved by NPI policyholders in the coming year, has been reached in the face of competition from UK insurers thought to include OGU and Britannic.

The AMP deal values NPI at about £1.9 billion. AMP will put up £50 million to cover the distribution of windfall payments in the third quarter of 1999. Another £1.4 billion will be "drip-fed" into the NPI life fund and received by policyholders as their policies mature.

AMP will contribute a further £800 million to NPI's capital base, giving it the financial strength to invest more money in equities. NPI put itself up for sale in October because its small size meant that

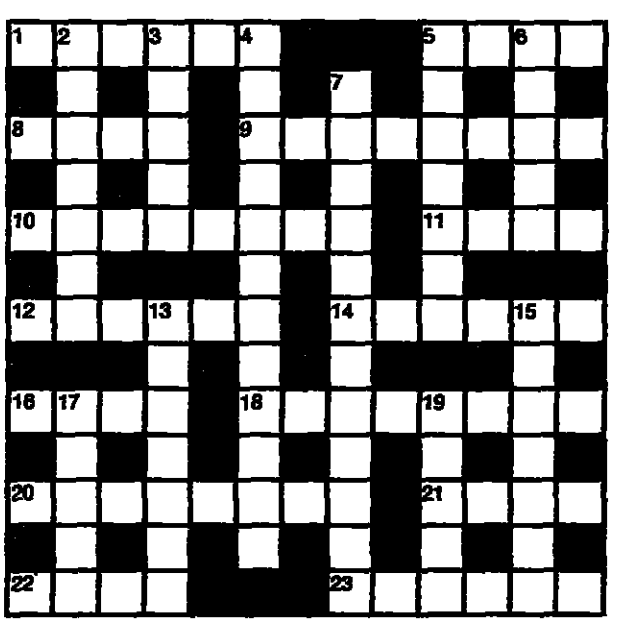
it was not allowed, under investment regulations, to put as much money into shares as it wished.

A spokesman for NPI said that job losses were unlikely. He said that it was not possible to suggest a maximum cash figure that a policyholder might receive, adding: "Payments will vary from several hundred to several thousand."

AMP is already active in the UK financial sector, owning Pearl Assurance, Henderson, the fund manager, and 49 per cent of Virgin Direct, which sells pensions, life insurance, Peps and savings accounts.

AMP will use NPI's relationship with independent financial advisers to sell more Pearl Assurance products.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1594

- ACROSS**
- 1 Sailcloth (6)
 - 5 Lull quieten (4)
 - 8 Report: Universe started with Big one (4)
 - 9 Eating greedily fast (8)
 - 10 Really happen (4,4)
 - 11 Relaxation, melting (4)
 - 12 Symbol of warm home (6)
 - 14 Pulsates painfully (6)
 - 16 Skim along evade creditors (4)
 - 18 In its original state: ancient (8)
 - 20 Thus (wrongly) designated (2,4)
 - 21 Be touching (4)
 - 22 Group of animals (4)
 - 23 Widen, expand (6)
- DOWN**
- 2 Fashionable: braised in wine (1,2,4)
 - 3 Indistinct (5)
 - 4 Soften bad news (5,3,4)
 - 5 Gun holder (7)
 - 6 One expected on Thursday night (5)
 - 7 Forgetful (6-6)
 - 13 England's smallest county (7)
 - 15 Lavish spread (7)
 - 17 Imprecise, not secured (5)
 - 19 Lag behind; path (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1593

ACROSS: 1 William 5 Stand 8 Brown 9 Douglas
10 Raspberry 12 Web 13 Ginger 14 Jubilee 17 Lee
18 Propriety 20 Aerated 21 Ghana 23 Henry 24 Outlaws
DOWN: 1 Weber 2 Loo 3 Ignoble 4 Modern 5 Saucy
6 Allowable 7 Disable 11 Sanhedrin 13 Goliath
15 Upright 16 Voodoo 18 Pithy 19 Yeats 22 Aga

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Art auctioneers left out of the picture

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

FRENCH authorities are dragging their feet over opening up the country's lucrative art market to international auction houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's.

The delay will ensure the continued flow to London and New York of French art treasures, such as Claude Monet's *Waterloo Bridge*, which was sold by Christie's for £3.2 million this year.

But it will also penalise both auction houses since they will

continue to be excluded from a country that was the centre of international art sales until the 1950s.

Both Sotheby's and Christie's have invested heavily in new and luxurious Parisian premises this year in the hope of staging sales in the French capital. Yet last week, the French Government said it had abandoned a commitment to end the monopoly of French auctioneers over the national market before next year.

It said a lack of parliamentary time had forced it to postpone legislation designed to demolish the restrictions that have been ruled illegal by the European Commission.

"The Bill may come back in 1999, although we cannot be sure," said a Justice Ministry spokesman.

The postponement represents the latest in a long line of victories for the 460 French public notaries who, under Gallic law, have the exclusive right to undertake auctions in France. They extracted a government promise to pay them Fr450 million (£48 million) in compensation for the loss of their monopoly, but want more.

Reform would transform the global art market. In the first half of this year, £16.9 million of Christie's £27 million sales was generated by 19th and 20th century art, in which French work was dominant. Alongside *Waterloo Bridge*, it sold *La Promenade d'Argenteuil* by Monet, for £3.1 million, and *Le Coup de Vent*, by Gustave Courbet, for £1.4 million.



Le Coup de Vent by Gustave Courbet fetched £1.4 million

Self-assessment launch cost £800m, says taxman's report

By CAROLINE MERRELL

THE total cost of introducing the self-assessment tax regime was about £800 million, according to a report from the Inland Revenue.

The exercise involved a £60 million training programme to help Revenue staff in 600 offices to get to grips with the new process. Self-assessment affected nine million people, 85,000 tax agents, 350,000 employers and 25,000 Revenue staff. The Revenue said that self-assessment was not

deemed to be a cost-saving exercise. Instead, it was hoped that it was an exercise in simplification and streamlining.

The report said that 400 people and organisations had responded to a Revenue survey on the new system. Responses showed that practitioners and members of the public, in particular pensioners, felt that the system needed to be simplified. Those responding were concerned about pension premiums, trading loss carry-

backs, overseas tax credits and farming profits.

The Inland Revenue blamed the complexity of the tax system for the problems with self-assessment. The report said: "Simplification of the law is, however, a matter for ministers and Parliament, and proposals for legislative change will be considered by Treasury ministers as part of the normal Budget process."

Power questioned, page 36

Bank of Scotland

Branches Variable Rate Mortgages are decreasing from 4th January 1999.

The new rates are:

Home Loan Rate	7.69% per annum.
Premier Flexi Mortgage Rate	7.19% per annum.

For existing customers this rate will apply from the first payment date on or after 4th January 1999.

For mortgages provided by Banking Direct, a Division of Bank of Scotland the following rate will apply from 4th January 1999 for both new and existing customers:

Banking Direct Mortgage Rate (Variable)	7.69% per annum.
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